

FREE FLIGHTS
51 pairs of Virgin Atlantic tickets to Johannesburg to be won
TOKEN THREE AND DETAILS
PAGE 45

ANGUS DEAYTON
"This is what attractive women put up with all the time"
PAGE 17

THE FUTURE
First look at the Millennium plans for Greenwich, PAGE 9

BUY BEFORE BLAIR SCARE
Alan Coren
PAGE 18

Arbitration in recognition disputes

Labour wants union role for judges

By Jill Sherman and James Landale

LABOUR was forced to disclose more details of its plans for trade union recognition yesterday, announcing for the first time that judges would have the final say in any disputes between employers and their workforce over recognising unions.

As Michael Heseltine accused the party of putting power back into the hands of trade unionists, Labour strategists had rapidly to flesh out its employment policy, adding details throughout the day.

The Tories had capitalised on their rivals' disarray by changing the topic of their early morning press conference, billed as an announcement of plans for extending testing for 14-year-old pupils.

Instead, the Deputy Prime Minister launched an all-out attack on Labour proposals to require firms to recognise trade unions where this was backed by 50 per cent of the workforce. Mr Heseltine said the measures would inflict "incalculable damage" on the country's reputation and pave the way for "licensed industrial blackmail", marking a return to the shopfloor strife of the Seventies.

"It could destroy in one session of Parliament our ability to attract massive investment from all over the world," he said. "Eighteen years of painstaking pursuit of excellence surrendered in 18 months of Labour power."

Gordon Brown, forced on to the defence, disclosed plans for a third party to arbitrate where employers and workers could not decide how union recognition would work. Party

Rifkind attack on federalism

The Government gave notice that it planned to block a new treaty on the future of Europe if other members pressed ahead with plans to create a defence arm within the EU. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, accused his European partners of trying to "lurch in a federalist direction" every two or three years.

sources later confirmed that different units of the workforce could be balloted separately. And they conceded that in some cases an employer would want different plants to take part in a single, all-embracing ballot.

In what was widely seen as an attempt to defuse the row, the party signalled that measures to change laws on trade union recognition would not be a key priority and might not appear in the first Queen's Speech. A Green Paper is expected in the first year of a Labour government but there is no timetable on legislation.

Yesterday morning the Shadow Chancellor emphasised that workers had a right both to join and not to join a trade union. Labour's latest policy was a milder version of a system, backed by Ronald Reagan, that had operated in America without problems for several years, he said.

"A recognised unit would be something that would have to be agreed... usually by

employers and employees themselves," he added. If they could not agree, then a third party would have to decide. Mr Brown then suggested "a judge" would be the final arbiter in any dispute over what constituted "the relevant workforce".

Later Robin Cook, chairman of Labour's policy forum, suggested on Radio 4's *The World at One* that the final arbiter should be the Central Arbitration Committee, which decides on industrial disputes. Two hours later party sources said disagreements would go initially to the Advisory Arbitration and Conciliation Service (Acas), then to the Central Arbitration Committee, which would in future be headed by a judge.

For several years Labour has suggested it would allow trade unions to be recognised at work if wanted by 50 per cent of the workforce. But it was only yesterday that the party was forced to clarify what would happen if there was a dispute between the employer and the employees.

Apart from pledging to reintroduce trade union recognition at GCHQ, Labour has made few concessions to the unions, claiming it will not repeal the raft of trade union laws introduced by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

One further change is to grant employees the right to appeal to an industrial tribunal if dismissed after taking part in lawful industrial action.

Peter Riddell, page 10
Leading article, page 19



Proud parents Edward and Gloria Minghella, centre, celebrate their son's Oscar success with staff at their Isle of Wight ice-cream factory

Isle of Wight hails cream of the Oscars

By Bill Frost

CONES generously laced with vintage champagne were handed out to well-wishers at an ice-cream factory outside Ryde on the Isle of Wight yesterday as Edward and Gloria Minghella celebrated the Oscar success of their son Anthony. His clutch of nine for *The English Patient* was Britain's best performance yet at the Los Angeles awards.

Close friends, neighbours and refuse collectors began arriving in ever larger numbers soon after the factory opened. The switchboard had given up under the pressure of calls from across the world and the fax machine was running out of paper.

Had Mr Minghella's parents had their way, he might never have enjoyed the limelight in Hollywood. Before he went to university to study English and drama, they had

suggested he follow them into the ice-cream business.

Yesterday, his father acknowledged an error of judgment as he basked in his son's triumph. "Yes, we weren't keen at first, his mother was horrified, but how could we have anticipated what would



Minghella holds aloft his best-director award

happen," he said. The director's mother, a deputy lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, was busy planning a celebration. "It's not every day your son wins nine Oscars and I doubt it will ever happen again."

He called twice from Hollywood right after the ceremony, he's not sure when he will be able to get back. But you can be sure we will lay on one of the best parties ever for his return. In the meantime, we will toast him again tonight in champagne.

Edward and Gloria Minghella both feature in *The English Patient*. Their son flew them to Rome and then Tuscany along with his Aunt Bessie to play in a crowd scene as peasants celebrating VE Day. "We are dressed in costume and my sister and I play the accordion," said Mrs Minghella proudly. "Edward, my husband, plays tambourine, but not very well." "There



"All we've got left is lying in the corridor"

was no fee — we did it for love. Anthony wanted us to feature in the film, he is very attached to his family and we are all very close. He knew my sister Bessie and I had played the accordion together as girls and wanted us to do it in the

film. He just kept on at me saying "please mum," until I gave in."

Ten miles from Ryde at Shanklyn, Anthony Minghella's English teacher was also celebrating his former pupil's success. Gareth Pritchard, 64, remembers "a generous boy" with an outgoing personality. "To see how unbelievably well he has done makes me, and everybody else who knows and worked with him, very proud. The good thing is he has kept his feet on the ground and has remained the personable, likeable chap he was when I first met him."

Mr Minghella himself believes his formative years in such a small and insulated community helped to shape his work. There are two references to the Isle of Wight in his film. "I wanted to give some-

Continued on page 3, col 1
Party politics, page 17

Constituency moves to oust MP in sleaze row

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

TORY party members have begun moves to force Tim Smith, the MP who accepted £25,000 in cash from Mohamed Al-Fayed, to stand down before the election.

And, in a letter to *The Times* today, Richard Branson, the

millionaire businessman, called on Mr Smith and Neil Hamilton, the MP for Tatton, who are at the centre of the cash-for-questions controversy, to go now.

Mr Branson, the chairman of Virgin, urged Beaconsfield and Tatton Conservatives to take matters into their own hands and deselect the MPs.

Mr Smith has admitted taking cash but Mr Hamilton, who accepted two holidays in the Paris Ritz and failed to declare income tax on payments from Ian Greer, the lobbyist, has denied receiving money from Mr Al Fayed.

Constituency officers in Bea-

consfield are consulting members to see if a new candidate should be chosen.

Caroline Straford, who until last week was the political chairman and vice-chairman of the Beaconsfield association, said last night: "I am not prepared to support Tim Smith. He admits taking cash in brown envelopes but is not sure how much. He says he included it in his tax return, and so ought to be able to stay. Tim Smith should take the honourable course and stand down. He is affecting the

Continued on page 2, col 3

Letters, page 19

Girl who killed at 12 is detained

Britain's youngest female murderer was ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure after being found guilty of killing a woman when she was just 12.

Sharon Carr, now aged 17, stabbed 18-year-old hairdresser Katie Rackliff to death. The judge told Carr: "You are a very dangerous young woman."

Page 5

Marconi deal

The Marconi Collection of historic items from the earliest days of radio is to be given to the Science Museum after a U-turn by the electronics firm GEC-Marconi, which had planned to auction it.

Page 6

The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

Judge defends jailing of jurors

By Richard Ford and Stephen Farrell

A JUDGE last night defended his decision to jail two jurors, Bonnie Schot and Carol Barclay, for 30 days for contempt of court after they refused to take part in the jury's deliberations.

Judge Anura Cooray's action is believed to be the first such in more than 300 years, but he insisted that the women had wilfully refused to bring in a verdict at the end of a 17-day trial. He was replying to critics after Miss Schot, 20, the jury foreman, and Miss Barclay, 32, were released from Holloway pending an appeal.

"I was satisfied that their refusal to participate in the jury's deliberations constituted a clear contempt of court, and as such a sentence of imprisonment was the most

appropriate course for me to take," he said. "Jurors must recognise they have a responsibility to fulfil their duties in accordance with their oath if



Judge Cooray says he had no option but jail

the criminal justice system is to be upheld."

The two women were imprisoned with ten other people last month to try five defendants in a £100,000 counterfeit currency case. They had heard evidence for 17 days at Knightsbridge Crown Court but, on March 12, after two hours of deliberation, it emerged that they had refused take part in discussions in the jury room because of their personal beliefs.

Miss Schot sent a note to the judge saying: "Your Honour, we are unable to come to any decisions owing to some jurors conscious [sic] beliefs. Please advise."

In his statement last night Judge Cooray said: "When the court asked for particulars

and clarification, a further note was received which read: 'Your Honour, some members of the jury cannot bring themselves to make a true judgment due to our beliefs, not religious but personal.'

"At the beginning of the trial, before we took the oath, we felt that we could not stand up in the court and stress this fact. We thought that our feelings may change over time. After retiring we found that we still feel the same and cannot give a true verdict to these defendants."

The judge's statement added: "It later emerged that one of the two names given was that of the jury foreman."

Continued on page 2, col 7
Leading article, page 19

TV & RADIO	50, 51
WEATHER	26
CROSSWORDS	26, 52

LETTERS	19
OBITUARIES	21
DANIEL JOHNSON	18

ARTS	38-40
CHESS & BRIDGE	49
COURT & SOCIAL	20

SPORT	47-50, 52
STYLE	16
LAW REPORT	25

SPORT	47-50, 52
STYLE	16
LAW REPORT	25

9

OSCARS

INCLUDING

BEST FILM

BEST DIRECTOR — ANTHONY MINGHELLA

RALPH FIENNES
JULIETTE BINOCHE
WILLEM DAFOE
KRISTIN SCOTT THOMAS

THE ENGLISH PATIENT

Foreign Secretary rejects moves on defence and immigration as foolish and dangerous

Rifkind threatens to block new Europe treaty

By CHARLES BREMMER, MICHAEL EVANS AND PHILIP WEBSTER

THE Government gave notice yesterday that it planned to block a new treaty on the future of Europe if other members pressed ahead with plans to create a defence arm within the European Union and to subject immigration to majority voting.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, thrust Europe to the centre of the election campaign in Rome as he accused his European partners of trying to "lurch in a federalist direction" every two or three years. In London, a Franco-German proposal to incorporate the Western European Union defence organisation into the EU within 10 years was condemned as a "betrayal" of agreements that had been carefully crafted over the past year.

Mr Rifkind rejected the fresh proposals put forward by the Dutch presidency for the new treaty to be signed in June in Amsterdam. He said it would mean that immigration and asylum policy could no longer be determined by democrati-

cally elected parliaments, and the EU would for the first time be turned into an organisation of "collective security." He said the proposals had been tabled as a basis for negotiation, but they were not a basis for agreement.

His tough stance, seen as another move to underline his own and the Government's increasingly Eurosceptic stance, came as Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, claimed that a Labour government would restore Britain's influence in Europe while the Tories would lead the country "towards the exit door." However, on the two issues earmarked as sticking points by Mr Rifkind, Labour's stance is equally unbending.

The Foreign Secretary's performance was dismissed by some of his European colleagues as blatant electioneering; they felt it marred the champagne celebrations for the EU's fortieth anniversary. In London, defence officials reacted

BRITAIN OUTPERFORMS GERMANY

Britain has jumped ahead of Germany, and one place behind Japan, in a world league table of economic performance published today. Top placings go to the United States, Singapore and Hong Kong. Britain has moved from 19th to 12th place in the study published by the Swiss-based consultants IMD.

Factors in the improvement were said to be strong growth, falling unemployment, internationalisation, the financial sector and governmental performance. Germany was said to have suffered as a consequence of the economic impact of the reunification of the country, high business costs, slow company restructuring, and employment rigidities.

furiously. They said Britain had made significant progress in persuading her European partners that the Western European Union — the Brussels-based body representing Europe's defence interests — should be inextricably linked to Nato. One senior British official said angrily: "The French and Germans have now thrown everything back into the pot, including the kitchen sink." Mr Rifkind said that the plan meant that for the first time in its

immense complications to EU enlargement.

Britain is far from alone in its opposition to the scheme. Although backed by a core group of five other EU countries, it is opposed by the four neutral states, which are not members of the WEU.

Diplomats said it was highly unlikely that the Franco-German defence plan would see its way into the revamped Maastricht treaty because Britain had strong support for its resistance from the neutral Continental states. The plan, described by Mr Rifkind as "foolish and dangerous", was formally discussed at the treaty negotiation in Rome yesterday after Hans van Mierlo, the Dutch Foreign Minister, suggested it be breached when the inter-governmental conference returns to defence next month.

The text, which won general support from the 14 other EU governments, provides for removing frontiers and applying majority voting to immigration and frontier questions within five years. It also

calls for doing away with the veto in certain areas of foreign policy. The draft, part of a complete treaty which must be agreed in Amsterdam in June, also calls for the EU gradually to take on responsibility for European defence through the Western European Union.

Mr Cook, meanwhile, sought to contrast Labour's approach of co-operation with Europe with the Conservatives' confrontation. Outlining Labour's six-point business plan for Europe, Mr Cook said: "We cannot get the best business deal out of Europe under a government that constantly wants to deal at all with Europe."

Tory divisions on Europe are likely to be highlighted today when John Redwood stages a London photocall to publicise his new book arguing against the single currency. Ministers had hoped that it would be a low-profile event and have tried without success to encourage Mr Redwood to "pull" the book.

Peter Riddell, page 10

Albanians take asylum claim to High Court

Seven asylum-seekers have brought a test case in the High Court claiming that thousands of Albanians who live under Serb rule in the former Yugoslavia and face ethnic cleansing have a right to political asylum in Britain. The case follows an Immigration Appeal Tribunal decision last July which held that Belgrade did have "a system or policy" for targeting Albanians.

Lawyers said the immigration authorities had adopted a "ludicrous" policy where each case had to be heard individually, costing the taxpayer millions in unnecessary legal aid. Mr Justice Hadden reserved judgment.

Arms challenge

Mr Justice Laws, sitting in the High Court, refused permission for campaign groups to seek a judicial review of the Government decision to allow arms sales to Indonesia. He said the complaint could only be "properly ventilated in the political field".

Leaders on TV

Leaders of the three main political parties have agreed to be questioned by a studio audience of 500 on ITV on April 28. They will not face each other in a head-to-head confrontation. Negotiations for a full television debate continue.

Girl's reprieve

Whitney Forrester, 7, who was due to be removed from her family and sent to an orphanage in Jamaica, was granted an eleven-hour reprieve. Her removal was postponed until April 4 after Jamaican authorities requested further information.

Loyalist death

A former Presbyterian minister, the Rev David Templeton, has died six weeks after loyalist terrorists burst into his house in Belfast and beat him with nail-studded cudgels as a "punishment" for allegedly importing pornographic videos.

Bail for father

Sion Jenkins, 39, the foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins, 13, is to be released on bail after spending 11 days in Lewes prison charged with her murder. He is expected to be released today after a hearing at Lewes Crown Court yesterday.

Conwoman jailed

Elda Beguinus, 52, who tried to pull off a £16 million bank fraud was jailed for two years yesterday at Southwark Crown court. After the case, police revealed that she was already a millionaire as a result of previous scams for which she was not charged.

Stretcher honour

A woman who is bedridden with the bone disorder osteoporosis attended a Buckingham Palace investiture on a stretcher. Sue Burns, 51, was appointed MBE in the New Year Honours for her work on behalf of fellow sufferers.

Tax return

A man who paid his council tax on time has won a new car from his local authority. Lambeth council, in south London, also offered cash prizes to encourage people to pay promptly. Anyone who paid in advance was eligible to enter the draw.

CORRECTION

The Archbishop of Canterbury asks us to make clear that he did not say that cohabiting couples were "living in shame" as a headline on a report yesterday implied. His point was to remind people that there are moral values worth espousing.

MPs call for Freemasons to come out

By FRANCES GIBB AND STEWART TENDLER

JUDGES, magistrates, police officers and Crown prosecutors should be required to declare publicly their membership of the Freemasons or any other secret society, the Home Affairs Committee of MPs said yesterday.

The committee's recommendation — which split members — follows its inquiry into Freemasonry in the judiciary and the police. Labour said it would introduce such a register if it won the election. John Major also supports the idea, despite some Tory opposition.

The MPs said in their report yesterday that there was "a great deal of unjustified paranoia about Freemasonry". There would be practical difficulties in establishing a register, but these would not be insuperable. "Nothing so much undermines public confidence in public institutions as the knowledge that some public servants are members of a secret society, one of whose aims is mutual self-advancement."

The committee urged Freemasons to set up a voluntary register rather than await legislation. "By openness and disclosure, all suspicion would be removed. We would welcome the taking of such steps by the United Grand Lodge."

The decision to recommend a compulsory public register divided the committee, with three Conservative members opposing the move. It was

endorsed by five Labour MPs and one Tory MP. The proposal will be opposed by the 8,500 Masonic lodges in England and Wales, and by the Police Federation, which represents 120,000 officers.

The United Grand Lodge of England attacked the proposal. The Grand Secretary Commander, Michael Higham, said: "As a lawful and law-abiding society, Freemasons will be disappointed by this hasty conclusion... a recommendation which, if implemented, would interfere with a fundamental right in British life. There is no basis for saying that one of Freemasonry's aims is mutual self-advancement. Freemasonry is not to be used to advance interest, and that is very clearly understood by every Freemason."

The report says that, according to information it received from the United Grand Lodge, none of the Law Lords, two of 39 Appeal Court judges and one of 96 High Court judges were Freemasons. One of 75 judges on the Midland and Oxford circuit, and 16 out of 64 judges on the North East circuit were Masons. The committee was given a list of members of the now-disbanded West Midlands Serious Crime Squad who served between 1974 and 1989. The United Grand Lodge said 14 of the 96 individuals named were Masons.

Judge faces criticism for jailing two jurors



Bonnie Schot, centre, leaving Holloway prison last night with her mother, Audrey, and sister, Donna

17th-century ruling established that refusal to deliver a verdict is common law offence

By FRANCES GIBB

A 17TH-CENTURY ruling by the Lord Chief Justice of the day established that it was a contempt under common law for a juror or jury to refuse to deliver a verdict unless to state that they cannot agree.

In a case called *Bushell* in 1670, jurors were committed to prison for returning a verdict "against the plain and manifest weight of evidence, and against the direction of the court on a point of law". But Lord Chief Justice Vaughan held that a jury could not be punished in a criminal case for such a finding, firmly establishing that jurors are immune over the verdicts they bring and cannot be sued if a conviction is later overturned.

Jury service is a duty that citizens have to undertake, barring those who are excused, ineligible or exempt. Refusal is an offence under the Juries Act 1974 and can carry a fine of up to £1,000. Juries do not have to justify or give reasons for their decisions. Until the 17th century, they were often punished for

verdicts proved wrong on appeal or contrary to the direction of the judge. The Court of Star Chamber often summoned juries and inflicted fines and imprisonment on them. In 1554, eight members of a jury were heavily fined and jailed for having acquitted Sir Nicholas Throgmorton of high treason.

But by 1607 the immunity of jurors to actions brought by people injured by a wrongful verdict was established in a case called *Floyd v Barker*, where it was held that a writ for conspiracy could not be issued against a juror from someone indicted but later acquitted.

But jurors who reach their verdicts capriciously — by determining their verdict by lot or by tossing a coin — commit an offence. A judge faced with a potentially biased jury — for instance, on racial grounds — has three options: to give further directions to the jury; to discharge up to three jurors from the 12 and to allow the trial to continue with the remainder; or to discharge the entire jury and order a retrial before a fresh panel.

Majority verdicts were introduced by the Criminal Justice Act 1967 and are acceptable where there are no fewer than 11 jurors and 10 of them agree, or where there are 10 jurors and nine agree.

Where a jury has reached a guilty verdict on the basis of a majority decision, the Juries Act 1974 requires the foreman of the jury to state in open court the number who agreed and disagreed. Judge Cooray, who was appointed Britain's second black circuit judge in 1991, was in the news once before when he was criticised for constantly interrupting during a criminal trial.

The then Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gosforth, in an appeal in 1993 by a man imprisoned for seven years for a drug offence, said that Judge Cooray had continually interrupted counsel and the defendant. There had been more than 90 separate interventions, he said. "Judges should remember that most people go into the witness box... in a state of nervousness." Defendants expected to receive a courteous hearing.

Continued from page 1
Bonnie Schot. The matter was carefully discussed with counsel when various implications were canvassed. And finally the court decided to discharge the whole jury and order a retrial.

On Monday Judge Cooray gave the two women the opportunity to explain their conduct but, after hearing them, he had no option but to jail them, he said. As she left jail last night, Miss Schot described the Sri Lankan-born judge as "a very spiteful and vindictive man". Miss Schot, who has three A-levels and had planned to be a barrister, added that she was no longer sure that she wished to pursue a career at the Bar.

Before her release she said she had felt bewildered by the facts of the lengthy case and had felt unable to make a decision. "I am shattered. It is outrageous that I have been locked up when I have never been in any trouble. I was just trying to do what was right." When she came out of Holloway, Miss Schot, her mother, Audrey, and her sister Donna, 33, were driven away by reporters from a tabloid newspaper. A few moments later a black BMW believed to contain Carol Barclay left.

Lola Barclay, mother of Carol Barclay, an unemployed nursery nurse, said she was delighted her daughter had been released. "We cannot believe this has happened. It has been a nightmare," she said from Shepherd's Bush, west London.

Penal reform groups last night attacked the decision to jail the two women. "This was an indefensible and draconian use of imprisonment. This unreasonably harsh action can only discourage people from serving on juries," Paul Cavadin, chairman of the Penal Affairs Consortium, said.

Leroy Redhead, the barrister representing the two women, said: "It is a very unfortunate situation and something which perhaps could have been handled slightly better."

Leading article, page 19

MPs 'must go'

Continued from page 1

credibility of the Prime Minister and the party."

The rare intervention in the political debate by Mr Branson, who has no plans to endorse any party in the run-up to polling day, will dismay the Tory high command.

The letter came two weeks after Mr Branson met leading Greek politicians in Athens and argued that British politicians could be trusted not to take bribes, which had not always seemed so in the rest of Europe.

He wrote: "When I returned home — to my embarrassment — it seemed that some British politicians may have behaved not a lot better."

"Even at this late stage

surely the constituencies in question should change their candidates for the next election — there are many young keen and forthright people who would like to... serve their country."

Mr Branson said: "Until the extraordinary revelations of the last few days I have always been proud of the fact that Britain is a very special country where favours could not be bought."

"Both these individuals should step down now. There should be no question of their constituency parties trying to support them. This episode has been one of the most demoralising factors in terms of the way the public regard politicians."

Race chiefs maintain legal threat against Armed Forces

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Ministry of Defence was given an official warning yesterday that it had failed to do enough to improve racial equality, and would face legal action unless significant progress was made in a year.

The warning from the Commission for Racial Equality followed a year of monitoring attempts to eliminate discrimination in the Armed Services. After a meeting yesterday, the commission said that it would suspend for another year a decision on whether to serve a non-discrimination notice on the MoD, which would place

the ministry under a legally enforceable obligation to carry out specific measures under the Race Relations Act.

However, the commission said that it was dissatisfied with the degree of progress "primarily in those areas which give a measure of the levels of commitment and willingness to change attitudes and practice".

When the CRE had agreed to suspend serving a non-discrimination notice 12 months ago, it drew up a five-year action plan. Christopher Boothman, the CRE legal

director, said there had been "no discernible sense of urgency" to face up to the problems. The commissioners could not ignore "highly disturbing evidence of the 'pervasive, long-running and deeply entrenched problem of racism' in a report by the Office for Public Management."

Angela Sirdar, 31, a former Army chef denied a transfer to the Royal Marines during defence cuts, lost a claim at an industrial tribunal in Norwich. The Marines said recruits had to be capable of being front-line commandos.

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The night that Hollywood lost the plot

Awards leave big names out of the picture

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES AND DALYA ALBERGE

EVERYONE in Hollywood was scripting their own plot for the Oscar results yesterday. Some said they were a victory for little-known stars over big names. Or a victory for independent ideas over the big studios. Or a victory for the British over everyone else.

Anthony Minghella, from Ryde, who won best director for *The English Patient*, had even announced from the stage: "This is a great day for the Isle Of Wight."

It was, above all, a night of triumph for *The English Patient*. The "intimate epic" of passion and betrayal in the war-torn Mediterranean all but swept the board, spearheading an outsiders' invasion of Hollywood by winning nine awards — including Best Picture — from 12 nominations. It also won a brace of Oscars for technical achievement and Best Supporting Actress for Juliette Binoche, who said that she thought Lauren Bacall deserved it more.

Ralph Fiennes, *The English Patient* star who interrupted a West End theatre run to fly in for the big night, was beaten to the Oscar for Best Actor —

Scott Thomas on her way into a lavish post-Oscar party at the Mondrian hotel, for which she wore a strikingly low-cut black taffeta gown by Christian Lacroix. She admitted: "Of course, I'm disappointed." Tim Bevan of Working Title, the British company behind *Fargo*, expressed delight at a second husband-and-wife success. Last year the company had a winner with *Dead Man Walking*, when Tim Robbins directed wife Susan Sarandon in an Oscar-winning performance. This year Joel Coen directed his wife, Frances, to the same award.

Lord Lloyd-Webber and Sir Tim Rice collected statuettes for *You Must Love Me*, the night's only prize for Evita. Madonna had performed the song earlier in the ceremony, but Sir Tim described himself as "a bit detached from it," since he wrote the lyrics nearly 20 years ago. Lord Lloyd-Webber joked: "Thank heavens there wasn't a song in *The English Patient*."

Britain's other awards went to the composer Rachel Portman for her score for *Emma* and to Stuart Craig and Stephenie McMillan for art direction in *The English Patient*, now one of the most honoured films in Hollywood history and the first since *The Last Emperor* in 1988 to win nine Oscars. Ben Hur (1959) holds the record with 11.

"It was the best possible outcome: far better than I could have imagined and a tremendous shot in the arm for independent film-making," said an effusive Minghella as he toured the party circuit on Monday night with his wife and two children, Max, 11, and Amanda, who was also celebrating her 18th birthday.

Fears that the 69th Oscars might not attract a mass TV audience because of its less-known prize-hunters proved unfounded. There was poignance when Mohammed Ali and George Foreman, sitting 2ft apart, rose to acknowledge the Oscar for *When We Were Kings*, a documentary on their 1976 "Rumble in the Jungle" title fight in Zaire. Supported by the man he beat, Ali defied Parkinson's disease to take the podium for an ovation. *The English Patient* is inspiring so many people to read the book that its Canadian author Michael Ondaatje is estimated to have made more than £500,000 in royalties. Nearly 500,000 paperback copies have been sold — 180,000 in the past three weeks.



Saul Zaentz, producer of *The English Patient*

along with Tom Cruise — by Australia's Geoffrey Rush, who played the troubled pianist David Helfgott in *Shine*. In his acceptance speech, Rush hit at "music critics" who have called Helfgott's current US concert tour a "circus". A circus, Rush said, was a place for risk-taking and inspiration. Helfgott then ran on to tumultuous applause to play *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*.

Kristin Scott Thomas wore a fixed smile after missing the Best Actress award, which went to Frances McDormand, the memorable pregnant policewoman in *Fargo*, an American film with British backing.

Just being nominated was "a fantastic way to punctuate the whole story" of *The English Patient*'s success, said



Juliette Binoche won the award for Best Supporting Actress, defeating Lauren Bacall

A British film? No, you will just have to be patient



Success for *The English Patient* is not a rebirth for the British film industry, writes Geoff Brown, our film critic

make films here — British films, not Hollywood product in disguise — they are small-scale, domestic offerings, often shaped by television money. Films such as *Four International's Secrets and Lies*, by Mike Leigh. It was nominated for five Oscars, from Best Film down-

wards, but received none. If it had won, British cinema could claim a real victory. It would signal that parochial material, full of modern British phobias, repressions and class conflicts, could reach hearts and minds overseas.

Minghella's epic offers sweeping camerawork, lus-

trous desert landscapes and the battleground of the Second World War. The crux of Leigh's drama lies with two people talking in a cafe near Holborn. For the Academy voters, there was no contest.

Yet the results give us enough reason to beat our own drum. If we cannot cherish our film talents properly at home, we certainly do a wonderful job of training them and offering them up to the world. The production designer Stuart Craig, awarded an Oscar for *The English Patient*, is one of the world's

very best in a field where British craftsmen have always excelled; this is his third win, following *Dangerous Liaisons* and *Gandhi*.

Recognition for Rachel Portman, for her music for *Emma*, has been longer in coming, though connoisseurs have always appreciated the colour and dramatic support her fitting scores gave to American films such as *Used People* and *Only You*.

In 1982, Colin Welland said "the British are coming" as he collected his script Oscar for *Chariots of Fire*. But the

British are always coming. Down the decades, we have given Hollywood Chaplin, Hitchcock, Ronald Colman, and too many others to list, plus those ace scriptwriters Jane Austen and William Shakespeare.

Now we have offered up Anthony Minghella as the heir apparent of David Lean. He is being inundated with scripts, some of which he might shoot in this country. His win should be savoured, but it leaves our "film industry" in much the same state as before.



Musical cameo roles for Minghella's aunt Bessie, left, and his mother Gloria

Isle of Wight celebrates

Continued from page 1
thing back to the island which has given me so much," he said. "A lot of the way I think and feel about life comes from growing up there."

At the Medina Theatre in

Newport, where *The English Patient* is showing, all last night's tickets were sold. David Holder, box office manager, said: "We have been turning people away — it's been booked solid every night

— all 425 seats. Everyone on the island is pleased and says how wonderful that such a classy film should have been made by someone who came from this community."

Brian and Lorna Braiding were among those with tickets last night. "I'm really looking forward to seeing this," said Mr Braiding. "It makes it even better that *The English Patient* was made by someone from here — it has given this community quite a boost."

Last night Morris Barton, the council leader, who is on an exchange visit to Virginia, said: "News of Anthony's Oscar awards has been a tremendous filip for us in boosting the Isle of Wight."

"It could not have been timed better and we now expect thousands of Americans to visit Minghella country. He has put the Isle of Wight on the world map."

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proposal will be sent to you by letter in the next few days and a policyholder circular containing

full details is expected to be issued in May. This will include details of how the above benefits will be distributed among our 1.1 million With Profit

policyholders. You will then have the opportunity to vote on the proposals at

a Special General Meeting. The proposals are subject to 75% of all eligible

policyholders who vote being in favour. If approved, it is expected that the transfer

of Scottish Amicable to the Prudential will take place shortly thereafter. If after receiving your letter you have any questions then please call the Scottish

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Any decision on voting should be based on the Policyholder Circular which will contain full details of your entitlement to vote. Further information at <http://www.scottishamicable.co.uk>

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1525 من الاصل

You are a very dangerous woman, judge tells teenager who killed when she was 12

Youngest female murderer jailed for stabbing

By DANIEL MCGORRY

BRITAIN'S youngest female murderer was ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure yesterday after being found guilty of killing a woman when she was just 12.

Sharon Carr, now aged 17, stabbed 18-year-old hairdresser Katie Rackliff to death, a jury at Winchester Crown Court decided. The judge said it was in the public interest to name Carr, whose identity had not been revealed at the trial, and told her as he passed sentence: "You are a very dangerous young woman."

There were gasps of relief from Miss Rackliff's parents, who had sat in the public gallery of the packed courtroom as the verdict was announced. Her father, Joe, raised his arms above his head. Detectives will now interview Carr again in an attempt to find out who she was with on the night of the killing.

Carr looked as though she had fainted as the jury of seven men and five women returned their guilty verdict after six hours of deliberation. She sat slumped in her seat as her defence counsel handed her a glass of water. But by the time her previous convictions were being read out the heavily built teenager stood smiling in the dock.

Outside the court Mr Rackliff stood with his wife, Helen, and his daughter Joanne, and told how he believed Carr deserved capital punishment and that he wished she would "rot in hell". He said the family were still distressed that others involved had not yet been caught.

The family had listened to evidence of how their daughter's body was found with multiple stab wounds near a cemetery at Farnborough, Hampshire, on June 7, 1992. She was last seen leaving Ragamuffins nightclub, where she had made an unsuccessful attempt at a reconciliation with her boyfriend. Staff remember "she seemed the worse for wear".

Her half-naked body was found four miles away five

hours later. The murder inquiry was one of the most intensive ever mounted by Hampshire police but they had no idea of Carr's involvement until her confession to a prison warden to whom she was sexually attracted.

During questioning she gave three different accounts of the night she killed Miss Rackliff, naming two boys. Police say they had nothing to do with the murder.

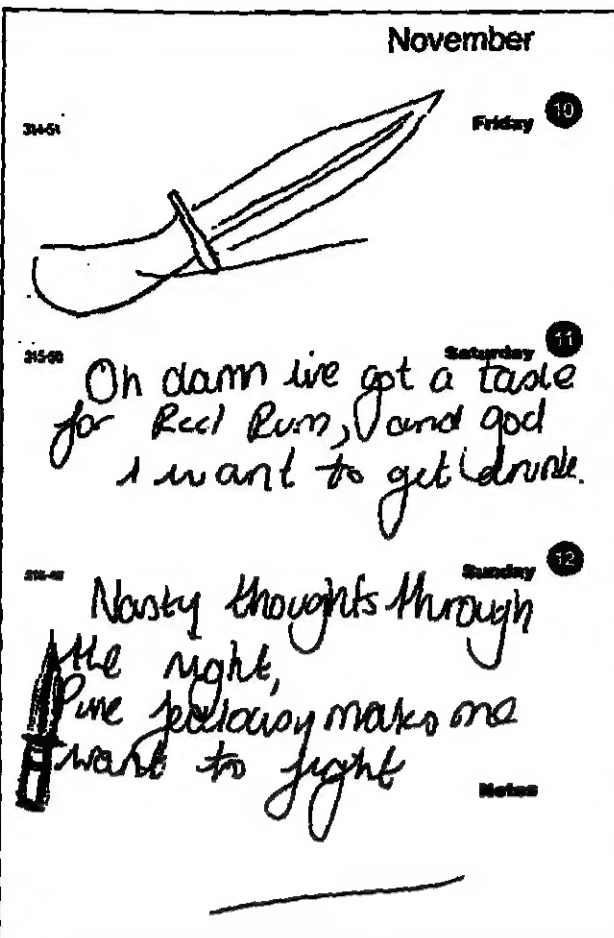
Carr had claimed Miss Rackliff tried to entice the boys away from her. Then she claimed she killed the attractive blonde hairdresser after the boys had raped her.

She later retracted all these stories but the jury heard how she gave away three crucial pieces of evidence that only the killer could have known.

She had detailed knowledge of Miss Rackliff's stolen bracelet, details of the scene of the crime and her admission how she had molested the victim after stabbing her at least 32 times with a seven-inch knife. Miss Rackliff suffered wounds to her heart, liver, lungs and stomach, and her private parts had been mutilated. The court also heard extracts from Carr's diaries and letters, in which she described the killing in gruesome detail. Tape recordings were played of her interviews with the police, in which she tells of Miss Rackliff's screams.

In her diary Carr said she decided to have "a payback life" because nobody had listened to her problems. She picked Miss Rackliff as a victim because "I needed to overcome her beauty, her serenity, her security".

In November 1995 she wrote: "Killing did me good. Now I know what I am capable of and I will do it again." Mr Justice Scott Barr told her: "What is clear is that you had a sexual motive for this killing and it is apparent both from the brutal manner in which you mutilated her body and chilling entries in your diary recording what you had done, that killing, as you put it, turns you on."



Sharon Carr's secret diaries contained pictures of knives, her grievances at society, and details of her feelings of sexual gratification at the murder of Katie Rackliff, right

Girl who thought she was a 'natural born killer'

By DANIEL MCGORRY

THE diaries of Sharon Carr revealed how a precocious schoolgirl thought of herself as a "natural born killer" who murdered one girl, stabbed another and tried to strangle two more women.

For three years she had kept the secret of how she mutilated and molested Katie Rackliff, an 18-year-old hairdresser, though she recorded in explicit detail the sexual gratification the killing gave her.

Carr, who was born in Belize, was caught only because she boasted about her crime to a woman prison officer, Annette Cini, whom she wanted to impress sexually. She was then at Bullwood Hall young offenders' institute after being convicted of stabbing a girl at Collingwood

School in Camberley, Surrey, where teachers remember her as being a "polite, helpful and above-average student".

Susan Carpenter, the vice-principal, said: "She had lots of older friends, boys and girls. A lot of the staff liked her, they found her very refreshing." She was describing a girl who by then had killed Katie Rackliff by stabbing her 32 times. Some of the blows were so powerful the knife went right through the victim's body.

Mrs Carpenter believed it was after Carr had problems at home, with her parents separating, that she became aggressive and an attention-seeker who used her physical strength to bully other girls. In June 1994 — almost two years to the day after Katie Rackliff was killed —

Carr stabbed a 13-year-old girl in the back, puncturing a lung. The girl remembers staring at Carr's face: "I could see she was smiling, but she looked angry as well." Carr then pointed the three-inch blade at her victim and threatened to kill her if she told anyone.

It was while she was on remand at the Middlesex Lodge Assessment Centre in Hillingdon that Carr tried to strangle two women staff in separate attacks. In December 1994 she was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm and ordered to be detained at Her Majesty's Pleasure. Despite hours of questioning by police, probation staff and social workers Carr never breathed a word about the murder.

Staff at Bullwood Hall encourage juvenile offenders "to confront their

past" in discussion groups but it was Carr's "crush" on Miss Cini that motivated her to break her long silence.

In the loft of her home in Camberley police found a scrap of paper on which she had written: "I'm a killer: killing is my business and business is good." In letters to a friend she wrote: "I swear I was born to be a murderer" and boasted how she had "a heart of terror".

Diaries and poems contained graphic descriptions of how Katie's murder both thrilled and haunted her. One entry recorded how "I enjoyed putting the blade up her, it made me feel powerful".

On January 13, 1995, she wrote "Remember KR. Oh God she did get me going so hot, pity really. I think about it and my head is spinning but

against the cops I'm winning." Carr told staff at Bullwood that she regretted never knowing her real father, who left her mother, Maria, shortly after she was born. She came to Britain when her mother married a soldier serving in Belize.

Since her first conviction Carr has been held at a number of young offenders' units but in January this year she was sent to Holloway Prison. A leading criminal psychologist, Professor Gordon Treasler, said he found it "very difficult to understand" the killing and had failed to find any precedents for it.

He described her as an "extremely dangerous person because she is clearly prepared to kill without an adequate motive". "That makes her conduct very unpredictable and very dangerous," he said.

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THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

Campaigners save Marconi Collection for Science Museum

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE Marconi Collection of historic items from the earliest days of radio is to be given to the Science Museum after a U-turn by the electronics firm GEC-Marconi, which originally planned to auction it.

The sale of 1,000 items of equipment and archives relating to Guglielmo Marconi's development of the invention was halted after protests, including one from Marconi's daughter, Princess Elettra Marconi, which appeared in *The Times*.

The auction was abandoned a month ago and the results of the negotiations, announced yesterday by the company, have resulted in a complete success for those opposed to the break-up of the collection. The Princess said it was "wonderful news".

"This is the best thing that could happen," she said from her home in Rome. "It's a wonderful day to think that the whole collection is saved and will remain in England."

The Science Museum, which will take responsibility for the long-term conservation of the 250 items of equipment and the 750 letters or documents, will lend many items for display in Chelmsford, where Marconi set up the first radio factory in the world. The borough council is planning to set up a science discovery centre and is hoping for money from the lottery fund.



Marconi's daughter wrote to *The Times*

Saving Marconi archive for nation

From Mrs Elettra Marconi

Sir, I was appalled to read in *The Times* that the archives of the Chelmsford factory were to be sold.

Other people will take up the challenge to ensure these archives are not dispersed.

Yours faithfully,
ELETTRA MARCONI
Via Candotti 11, Rome 00187,
February 9.

The papers will go to the Essex County Council archive, where they will be available to scholars.

Sir Geoffrey Patie, chairman of GEC-Marconi, said that the company was "absolutely delighted" to have come to an agreement with the Science Museum. He said that, before deciding on the sale, the company had looked

at the options available for preserving the collection, but had not made much progress.

Since the sale had been announced, he said, the company had received constructive proposals from the Science Museum and Chelmsford Borough Council. "Once we had those possibilities, the whole scene opened up."

The company originally valued the collection at £1 million, now revised to £3 million. The proceedings of the sale were to be used to fund "Marconi Days" for teachers, organised by the Institution of Electronic Engineers and designed to raise their skills in electronics. Now GEC-Marconi will fund the initiative from other resources.

The items in the collection date back a century to when Marconi arrived in Britain from Italy with the aim of making radio communication a reality. He did so with the help of the Post Office, later founding the company that still bears his name.

John Sutherland, a former managing director of Marconi Radar whose letter to *The Times* protesting about the sale was instrumental in rallying opposition, said yesterday: "I'm absolutely delighted. This is an excellent decision from which everyone will benefit: the public, the Science Museum, Chelmsford and the good name of GEC-Marconi. No recriminations — this is the right thing to do and I'm very pleased."



Dr Moses with Great Paul, the bell that was hung at St Paul's Cathedral in 1882

Lunch bell will ring out over City once again

BRITAIN'S largest bell has been restored and will chime at 1pm today at St Paul's Cathedral for the first time since 1991. Great Paul, the 17-ton bell that used to summon City apprentices back from lunch, has not been heard since the clapper cracked. The bell, cast in 1882 by John Taylors of Loughborough, was repaired by



Go-ahead puts Royal Opera on the road

By Dalia Albergé
AND ALASDAIR STEVEN

PERFORMERS and promoters were breathing sighs of relief yesterday as it emerged that the Arts Council had approved two-year itineraries for the Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet, just 16 weeks before the two companies become homeless.

An official announcement is due on Thursday following a board meeting today at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, which is closing for two years for redevelopment. However, sources revealed that the Royal Opera's productions will range from *The Merry Widow* at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London, to Brinen's rarely heard *Paul Bunyan* at the East Anglian Opera Festival. The Royal Ballet's schedule will include *Cinderella* at the Royal Festival Hall and a tour of Japan.

The decision means that contracts with singers can be drawn up and venues leased. Long delays have led to confusion, with agents expressing frustration and potential sponsors feeling nervous. The management of the Royal Opera had not been able to book venues and artists until it had the go-ahead from the Arts Council, which in turn would not sanction expenditure until it had a schedule of performances.

Lord Chadlington, new chairman of the Royal Opera House board, told a recent meeting: "The financial situation is very serious. We have an accumulated deficit approaching £3.5 million at the end of the last financial year. In the current year, we are going to increase that. We do not know how much, but certainly by a significant sum. We have got to sort out the finances once and for all."

Immediate plans after the July closure also include short visits to New York's Metropolitan Opera House with the Royal Opera's *Palestrina* and the Royal Ballet's *The Prince of the Pagodas*. American backers will pay travel costs.

The Royal Opera will appear at the Edinburgh Festival and the Barbican Centre in London. The ballet company will perform Tchaikovsky at the Labatts Apollo, Hammersmith.



Connolly: bad language

BBC earns swearing reprimand

The Broadcasting Standards Council has criticised the BBC for the use of "offensive" language after 75 viewers complained about a series presented by the comedian Billy Connolly.

The BBC said that the extracts from Connolly's stage act, which contained the bad language, were integral to Billy Connolly's *World Tour of Australia*.

Hanratty delay

The family of James Hanratty, hanged in 1962, are disappointed because the Home Secretary has had no time to consider an appeal plea and has referred the case to the new Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Vote forms forged

Dilys Lewis, 37, was jailed for two months for forging eight proxy voting forms for elections to the new Rhondda Cynon Taff Council in 1995. The former Mid Glamorgan councillor still failed by more than 100 votes to gain a seat.

Towels too hot

Woolworths has had to pulp 250,000 copies of its quarterly magazine *Good Ideas* after a spring-cleaning tip backfired. It suggested sterilising tea towels in a microwave oven but some readers' towels burst into flames.

Drinks hiccup

The Victoria Wine Company is to review its promotions after it offered the Thane Alcohol Project at Margate, Kent, which helps alcoholics, gift-wrapped bottles and interest-free credit on deliveries of wines and spirits.

Pilots' wings may be clipped after aerobics cause high death toll

PILOTS of light aircraft may be banned from performing aerobics after new figures showed human error was to blame for recent fatal crashes. The Civil Aviation Authority said yesterday that ill-judged low-altitude aerobics were responsible for nearly one in five fatal accidents in 1985-94.

The CAA recommends that private-pilot licence holders be banned from performing solo aerobics until they earn a special aerobics rating. Pilots will have to attend special

training and have a proficiency check every two years.

The training syllabus for flying instructors should be reviewed, particularly in respect of navigation and weather training, the CAA added.

A report showed there were 166 fatal accidents involving light aircraft and helicopters between 1985 and 94, with 234 people killed in fixed-wing aircraft and 46 in helicopters. The CAA said the three-year moving average of accidents over the ten years had fallen,

but added: "Most of the more recent accidents, caused in the main by human error, could have been avoided."

At present, private pilot licence holders can continue to fly without any proficiency check providing they fly for at least five hours every 13 months. The CAA said it would also "review the availability, clarity and layout of all information necessary in the United Kingdom for safe and legal general aviation [light aircraft] flying".

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SATURDAY
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MAGAZINE

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COOL

Leonardo di
Caprio
reinvents
Shakespeare
in the
Magazine
ANIMAL
WATCH
Guide to the
best zoos in
Britain
in Weekend

Omdurman diary tells of the bloody cavalry charge to end them all

By JOHN VINCENT

IT WAS a bloody flourish at the height of British imperialism — a traditional cavalry charge into the "Infernal Regions": "Frightful slaughter of enemy. Horrible sights of dead and dying. Men on all fours creeping, finally giving up and lying down to die. It seems to be blood, blood, blood everywhere."

So wrote Lieutenant Robert Smyth in a graphic account of bravery and carnage at the battle of Omdurman, nearly a century ago. His diary entry describes a battle in which superior weaponry overcame the fanatical Dervish hordes as the British Army mounted what is generally considered to be its last cavalry charge.

The 30-year-old Smyth, a general's son, led a platoon of the 21st Lancers which bore the brunt of the fighting. He had little sympathy to spare for the enemy. "It is like the Infernal Regions," he wrote in the diary for his sister, Alice. "I never saw anything so disgusting. Crowds of horses and donkeys all died. I believe the Sudanese [sic] raided and slaughtered the night after the battle to a great extent. If I had my



General Thomas Eastwood

way, every man we captured should have been shot at once then and there, cold blooded or not. If you had seen the condition of our dead you would have said the same."

The previously unpublished diary is to be sold tonight at the auction house of Henry Aldridge & Son in Devizes, Wiltshire, along with an archive of material relating to Smyth's nephew, General Thomas

Eastwood, a commander in the Second World War. Both are offered by a member of the family. Smyth's gripping account of Omdurman, which confirmed the British reconquest of the Sudan and avenged the death of General Gordon at Khartoum, is expected to fetch around £10,000. His nephew's archive should make considerably more.

Andrew Aldridge, the auctioneer, said yesterday "Reading Smyth's diary brings a lump to my throat. I could see the battle unfolding before my eyes."

Despite the carnage, Smyth, who survived his wounds to become a much-decorated brigadier-general in the First World War, was proud to have taken part. "Wise or unwise, it was a brave deed nobly done... it proved that cavalry still existed and that we did not come here to play at mounted infantry."

Earlier he wrote: "Horses lame and galloping aimlessly. Regular inferno. My left-hand man drops, his horse shot under him. Bullets whistling and splashing all around. Every side a compact mass of white-robed men, apparently countless, still firing and waving swords. "Man bolts out leading two



The 21st Lancers' battle with the Dervishes at Omdurman conjured up "the Infernal Regions"

donkeys in my way, catch hold of horse hard by head, knowing to fall would be fatal. Am met by swordsmen on foot. Cuts at my right front. I guard it with sword.

"Next man with far face, all in white, having fired, missed me, throws up both hands. I cut him across the face. He drops. Large bearded man in blue, with two edged sword, cuts at me. Think this

time I must be done for. Duck my head to spear thrown which just misses me. Another cut at my horse but luckily only cuts through my breastplate and gives my horse a small flesh wound. See Major Wyndham running. Gallop to help him. I am just too late."

The battle over, Smyth wrote: "Words are passed on. 'Poor Grenfell killed', '2,000 men', 'Brinton

shot' and 'Poor little Smyth killed' etc. (The Colonel, Montmorency, and Dauncey at first mistook Grenfell for me, he was so horribly mutilated)."

He went on: "No mess. No ration... I was ill and in pain but I got some opium and other medicine and am now feeling all right again." The diary was written on September 4, 1898, two days after the battle.

History of Russia wins book prize

By ERICA WAGNER
LITERARY EDITOR

ORLANDO FIGES's sweeping historical study, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924* (Cape, £25), has beaten such literary contenders as Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (Bloomsbury) and Graham Swift's *Last Orders* (Picador) to win the £10,000 1997 WH Smith Literary Award.

Norman Stone, Oxford Professor of Modern History, has described Mr Figes as the leading historian of Russia of his generation. The author, a university lecturer in history and Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, is the son of the novelist Eva Figes and the brother of the writer Kate Figes.

Mr Figes said yesterday: "History is a part of literature. This seems part of a trend. Quite a lot of historians have picked up prizes for literary endeavours: history is returning to narrative and returning to the general reader. I feel a sense of corporate pride." Hermione Lee's *Virginia Woolf* (Chatto) was the only other non-fiction work on the shortlist. Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark* (Cape) and Roddy Doyle's *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* (Cape) were also on the list.

Hitman parents walk free

By ROBIN YOUNG

A COUPLE who hired a hitman to beat up their daughter's violent lover walked free from court yesterday.

John Llewellyn, a businessman, and his wife, Maureen, both 50, had described a four-year "living nightmare" after their daughter fell for a schizophrenic. Mrs Llewellyn said: "It was just our love for her that led us to this drastic action."

The couple met Stephen Pellow, a security expert, after their daughter's lover had struck her days after she gave birth. The intended hitman went to the police and the couple, from Michaelstone-on-Fedw, near Newport, were arrested.

Charges of soliciting murder were dropped, but Mr Llewellyn admitted soliciting Mr Pellow to commit grievous bodily harm and was given a two-year suspended jail sentence. Mrs Llewellyn admitted soliciting to cause actual bodily harm and was put on probation for two years.

After being released yesterday, the couple hugged outside Swansea Crown Court and said it was the end of "our nightmare". Mr Llewellyn said: "I'm very relieved that the judge has shown compassion. It was terrible seeing our daughter suffer."

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Lottery millions fund construction as big as 13 Albert Halls — but what goes inside remains a mystery

Lift-off for dome starts millennium countdown

BY MARCUS BINNEY

ON PAPER, the Millennium Dome looks not unlike a giant whoopee cushion pierced with cocktail sticks. In reality, it will be big enough to take 13 Albert Halls — or 50,000 people. The "cocktail sticks" are steel lattice girders over 100m high, each supporting a forest of tension wires.

Only in the planning application, which has now been approved by Greenwich council, does the stupendous scale of the dome, designed by the Richard Rogers Partnership, become apparent: the dimensions have been expanded so that the diameter measures 360m instead of 320m.

The organisers, renamed Millennium Central, have a firm offer of £200 million of lottery cash, plus a guarantee of £250 million from the Millennium Commission. The latter is subject to reassessment, but not cancellation, by an incoming Labour Government.

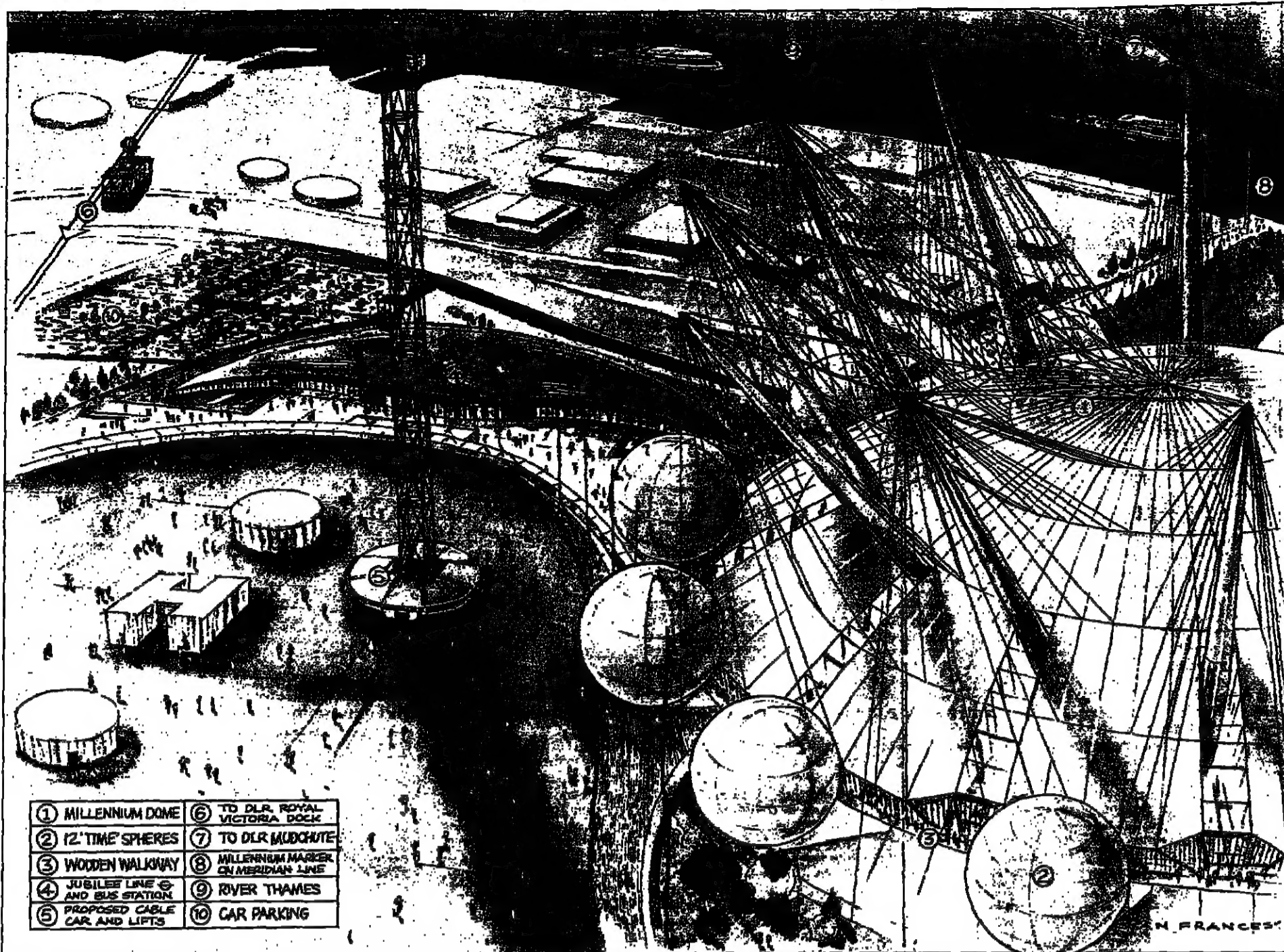
The contract for the steel will be signed within the month and McAlpine Laing are on board as construction managers. Debate is still raging about the fabric roof.

Greenpeace has objected vigorously to the use of PVC, which it claims is noxious in both manufacture and disposal, producing vast quantities of carcinogenic dioxins. For the organisers, PVC is simply far cheaper than any of the alternatives.

Another problem is what to do with the dome after the two-year Millennium Exhibition ends. Millennium Central is committed to taking it down unless they can convince English Partnerships, the owners of the site, otherwise. A favoured long-term solution is the creation of a "sports city". The clear floor space is large enough for football, athletics or a velodrome. However, the Sports Council is unlikely to make a commitment until it sees the dome in action.

It also remains to be seen whether the dome can attract sufficient visitors to fuel the revised budget, down from £700 million to £583 million. Initial forecasts were based on an average ticket income of £20 a head from 12 million visitors over two years. The 1994 Seville Expo attracted 52 million visitors but that was an international event and included many repeat visits. The Greenwich exhibition is very definitely a national affair.

The exhibition designers, Imagination, originally planned that the central theme would be a play on time, but this has a ring of Disney's well-established Epcot in Florida. The main attractions are now likely to be events held under the centre of the dome, in the style of Lloyd-Webber



The Millennium Exhibition site at Greenwich features a massive dome, new Underground and bus stations and, possibly, a cable car system spanning the River Thames

extravaganzas, staged between two to six times a day and lasting an hour to 90 minutes. They will feature such broad themes as spirituality, the young, education and ecology. More events could be held in the plaza outside, possibly including circuses and the Royal Tournament.

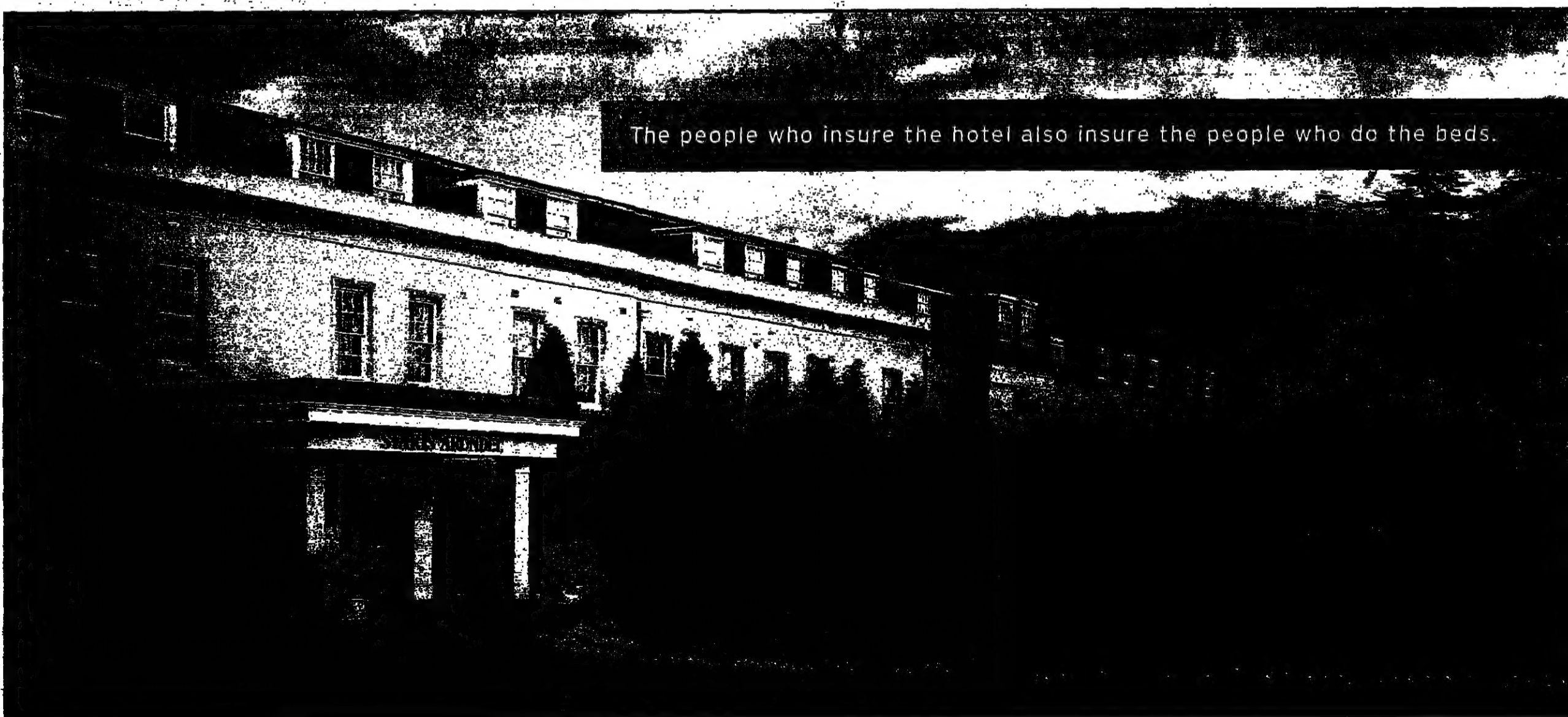
A major problem for the organisers is the blasted-heath appearance of the site. There is not a tree to be seen and, capped over beneath the surface, are decades of industrial pollution. With all the building work, there is unlikely to be a blade of grass growing on December 31, 1999, and trees will have to be planted on raised banks to avoid their roots touching poisoned soil.

Although the exhibition is to be car-free, the organisers have conceded that many visitors will arrive by road and nearly half the site is taken up by parking space. The good news is that the Jubilee Line Underground extension, to be opened in September next year, goes into the heart of the site, to a spectacular new underground station by the architect Will Alsop (with a bus station by Sir Norman Foster on top). Tube journey

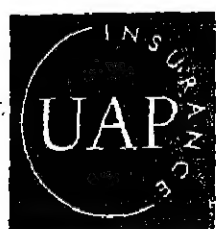
times from Waterloo are 15 minutes, and less from Stratford. London Transport says it can run up to 30 trains an hour in each direction. A commercially funded cable car system, linking the exhibition site with two Docklands Light Railway stations north of the river, is another possibility. However, the best way to arrive will be by water. The site has two existing piers

which are to be refurbished. Jenny Page, chief executive of Millennium Central, said: "We are looking at park-and-sail at Barking. We'll provide facilities but not subsidies for river boat operators and I'm confident the exhibition will be a long-term boost to river traffic."

The 1,000-day countdown to the Millennium will begin on April 6. While the dome may be on the critical path to completion, the content of the exhibition has still to be decided. The lottery millions are riding on Imagination's Gary Withers, the designer best known for his dramatic floodlighting of the Lloyd's building. The British calendar is packed with ever more successful events and festivals and Mr Withers is well aware that he has to cap them all.



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Leading Tories are linked with seat of MP who quit

By MAGNUS LINELLER

SCOTTISH Tories moved quickly yesterday to limit the damage caused by the surprise resignation of the MP Allan Stewart as a candidate for their safest seat.

Mr Stewart, a former Scottish Office Minister, is standing down from his Eastwood constituency on health and personal grounds after press reports linked him with a married woman he is said to have met while attending a clinic specialising in alcohol problems.

Last night the names of three leading party figures were among those being mentioned as possible successors. Sir Michael Hirst, the party chairman, and former MP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden, refused to rule himself out of the race. "No one ever says never in life," he said, adding: "If I was approached by the association then I would obviously give the matter serious consideration."

Annabel Goldie, deputy chairman of the party, would be another obvious choice, as would Jackson Carlisle, party vice-chairman and a former chairman of the Eastwood Conservatives. Adrian Shinwell, vice-chairman of the Eastwood association ruled himself out as a candidate but said that he believed someone senior in the party would be a likely choice. Last night, Ian

Muir, chairman of the Eastwood association, emphasised that there was no question of being rushed.

The association executive will be meeting tonight to consider a shortlist, but any recommendation has to go to the association's members for approval. "We have to have a candidate in place before the April 16 to allow him or her the fullest opportunity to fight the campaign," Mr Muir said.

Both Labour and the Scottish National Party, while paying tribute to Mr Stewart as a strong and likeable MP, lost no time in capitalising on the episode. Jack McConnell, general secretary of the Scottish Labour Party, said: "The Tory campaign has been a disaster since last Monday because they have no ideas left for the country." He pointed out that senior figures in the party, including Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State, had so far been notable for their absence. Michael Russell, chief executive of the SNP, said: "Top Tories will be fighting like ferrets in a sack over this vacancy."

However, senior Tory officials remained confident that despite the setback they would buck the trend and hold onto their key seats, including Mr Forsyth's Stirling constituency. "It's interesting that Labour have refused to answer

key question that we have put to them arising from their recently launched Covenant for Scotland," one senior Tory said. "Instead, Tony Blair in Aberdeen preferred to talk about the Spice Girls."

The Glasgow suburb of Newton Mearns, the Conservative heartland of the Eastwood constituency, reacted with a mixture of sympathy and cynicism to news of their MP's resignation yesterday.

In the shopping centre many were not unduly surprised by the allegations about Mr Stewart's private life or his health. Many expressed sadness that someone who had worked hard for Newton Mearns was stepping down in such circumstance and so close to the general election.

But the over-riding opinion was that his absence would make no significant difference to the Conservative majority of 11,688 in Eastwood.

Kath Chalmers, a mother of three, said: "This is to do with his personal life and is nothing to do with his life as an MP. He has done all right for this town and I think most people will be supportive."

Robert McCracken, 69, of nearby Barrhead, said: "I don't vote Tory, but I quite liked him. He seems to be more sensitive than most MPs and maybe he just couldn't take any more criticism."

Blair warns pupils off drugs

By SETHELY ENGLISH

TONY BLAIR chose a schoolroom in Aberdeen yesterday to launch a proposal for an American-style anti-drugs supreme who would co-ordinate Labour's policy on drugs and report directly to a Cabinet minister.

At Dyce Academy, Mr Blair told an audience of 15 and 14-year-olds that he would appoint a "drugs czar" to help to

educate young people not to take drugs. The appointment would signal the determination of a Labour government that it was "not prepared to tolerate the waste of any more young lives". He asked pupils if they had ever been offered drugs, then told them: "Just say no."

Yesterday the Church of Scotland called for a Royal Commission to be appointed to consider the legalisation of

cannabis. The call was denounced by Mr Blair and by Ian Oliver, the Chief Constable of Grampian Police and the man tipped to become Labour's anti-drugs supremo. Mr Blair said: "I'm against it because it leads to hard drugs." Dr Oliver said the Church was "pandering to a liberal attitude" which could cause great harm.

Leading article, page 19



Allan and Susie Stewart outside their country home yesterday. Below, Mrs Knight

Silent Stewart stays home with the family

By A STAFF REPORTER

ALLAN STEWART was happy to pose with his wife outside their country home in Neilston yesterday but refused to talk to reporters.

He rubbed his hands against the cold and smiled for the cameras before putting his arm protectively around his wife, who stood silently by his side. He refused to comment on his resignation letter, which said recent press reports about his personal life and his health had caused distress.

The letter, which was delivered to the Eastwood constituency office at 6pm on Monday, said: "After discussing my health and position with Susie, who has always been so

supportive of my role as the Member of Parliament for Eastwood, I have decided to resign as prospective parliamentary candidate."

At the weekend a tabloid newspaper linked Mr Stewart, 54, to Catherine Knight, 47, a married mother of four. The paper said Mrs Knight had been a regular visitor to his London flat, which overlooks the Oval cricket ground.

The allegations followed on from his recent admission that he attended an alcohol rehabilitation centre in Peebles last winter. "I have nothing to add to my statement yesterday. I have made a statement and that's it, but I'm perfectly happy to pose for photographs," he said. Mrs Knight declined to comment.

Voters given little to cheer in fight of few punches

THE television election battle has turned this week to the economy, with the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, and his shadow, Gordon Brown, both refusing to put their heads above the parapet or risk all-out attack.

The Clarke line is the old Harold Macmillan boast of "You've never had it so good", while warning voters that Labour is bound to spoil it. Brown intones that Labour can be trusted to spend and tax no more than the Tories. There is not much difference between the two.

The two heavyweights met on Monday on *Newsnight*, with Peter Snow refereeing, a venue that suggested at least a few bruises and perhaps a cut or two above the eye. But this was no boxing match. They seemed more like sumo wrestlers shoving and sweating their way around a small space that both needed to occupy. Neither gave an inch, nor would risk going too far on the offensive lest he expose a weak flank.

Both have been warning up since the election was called. Mr Clarke has set out his stall at two morning press conferences live from Central Office, reading without passion from a dreary script. Mr Brown went a sparring round on Sunday with John Humphrys on *On The Record*, and he stalled and stonewalled even when there was nothing new to give away.

When the big fight arrived, both refused to come out of their corners. What is going on? Whatever happened to the roly-poly Clarke who loved to mix it with his opponent, a pint of beer in one hand, a cheroot in the other? Where was the pugilist in the Carrick tie and suede shoes who used to slip the stiletto in with a chuckle?

Mr Brown has quite other virtues. His wit is slow, his style ponderous. An endearing smile plays around his lips when asked a question, but there is no attempt to

endear himself with the television audience. He is the master of detail, a swot who has worked long and hard to acquaint himself with every eventuality. But he is damned if he is going to pass off his labours as effortless.

The big debate soon ran aground. Mr Brown said that manufacturing investment was down; Mr Clarke said no, investment as a whole was up. Mr Brown insisted that manufacturing investment was down; Mr Clarke said he was looking at one month's figures; Mr Brown said no, they were for a year. And so it went on, like two brothers bickering.

TV WATCH
NICHOLAS
WAPSHOTT

There were several missed opportunities. Mr Clarke made great play of Mr Brown's refusal to list the companies hit by Labour's utilities tax when he might better have taken the side of the innocent recent investor hit by such an arbitrary tax. It all ended in stalemate, as if both men had conspired to keep the electorate in the dark.

The dog not allowed to bark was the question of Britain's entry into the single European currency, which will be decided in the next Parliament. Where would that lead their promises of a better tomorrow? Would we be better off in or out? Their answers would have been worth listening to.

Time's running out...



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*Source: Standard & Poor's UK Growth and Income sector. Figures are calculated on an offer to bid basis with net income reinvested, on a year of year basis from 3.3.95 to 3.3.97.

Colony land sells for £150m an acre

Hong Kong: A 6.3-acre plot of land here was sold for £950 million yesterday in what experts described as probably a world record as well as a resounding vote of confidence in the territory's future.

The 275,369 sq ft site at Chai Wan, on the north-eastern edge of Hong Kong island, was bought from the Government for £150 million an acre by Sino Land for residential and commercial use. Sino Land sealed the deal after the longest auction in the colony's history — a buying frenzy that began at £522 million and ended 24 hours later.

"As far as Hong Kong is concerned, this is certainly a record price," Herbert Leung, the government auctioneer, said.

Michael Green, Salomon Brothers director, said the price "is probably the highest price paid at auction for any site ever in the world." It equates to £435 per square foot before one's even put a building on it.

Robert Ng, chairman of Sino Land, asked whether he believed that the firm had confidence in the future of Hong Kong under Chinese rule, just 98 days away, said: "You ask me this question after we pay this sum? Are you crazy?" (AFP)

Angry workers challenge power of German banks

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

MORE than 20,000 angry steelworkers yesterday protested against the power of Germany's banks in a direct challenge to the financial system that has ruled the country since the Second World War.

The protests were staged in Frankfurt, mainland Europe's financial capital, and some newspapers warned that the harracking of Germany's private banks could soon spill over into demonstrations against the European Central Bank as controller of the euro.

Foundry workers made bonfires of bank statements in Frankfurt's financial quarter and chanted: "We will not be cheated out of our jobs." Union activists blocked the paths of nervous stock analysts and urged them to withdraw their accounts from the banks targeted by the workers. In Dortmund, 6,000 workers in Krupp-Hoesch went on strike.

The demonstrators, who had been bussed in from the Ruhr and other industrial regions, blame Deutsche and Dresdner banks for helping to engineer Krupp's £5 billion hostile takeover bid for Thyssen and thus putting tens of thousands of jobs in peril. The unprecedented bid was withdrawn on Monday afternoon and the companies say they are close to securing a working arrangement stopping

short of a full merger. But the unions are nervous that even this will entail big job cuts and that the role of the banks is still destructive.

Klaus Zwickel, chairman of the IG Metall union — one of the most powerful in Europe — launched a blistering attack on the influence of the banks. To loud applause he said they were creating a "casino capitalism that has become a danger to the general public."

Who rules in Germany? The elected representatives or boardroom bankers?

Workers whistled and cheered when he added: "The banks are destroying the political culture of our country. Behind our backs, with secret general staff-like planning, they prepared a move which extinguishes our jobs. Parties and parliaments have to ask themselves: who rules in Germany? The democratically elected representatives or the bankers in the boardrooms?"

The close co-operation of

banks with industrial companies has been the very essence of the German economy since the war and has roots in the 19th century. As workers are guaranteed seats on supervisory boards there have been few challenges.

But the conflict of interest exposed in the steel takeover bid, with the same banks sitting on the boards of two rival companies, has coincided with painful social spending cuts and a general decline of heavy industry. This mixture has sparked revolt.

Krupp came under pressure to withdraw the hostile bid, described as "Wild West capitalism" by the Bonn Government and by the Social Democrat-controlled administration of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The banks, too, have "reviewed their positions" and concluded that the financial advantages of a takeover were probably outweighed by the social costs and, above all, by the loss of image.

The workers said yesterday that they would continue to protest until guarantees were given that there would be no compulsory redundancies.

Coalminers recently won a similar concession from Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, in return for accepting cuts in mining subsidies and pit closures.



Steelworkers demonstrate in Frankfurt over the role of bankers in a hostile takeover bid

Solution closer in Lima siege

Lima: A solution to the hostage crisis at the Japanese Ambassador's residence here seemed closer last night after Carlos Hermoza, the Justice Minister, said between 200 and 250 prisoners unjustly accused of terrorism and detained across the country will be freed. He gave no date.

Although he insisted there was no link between this release and negotiations on the hostage crisis, his remarks came after mediators spent all day talking to government officials and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary rebels on Monday. (AFP)

Security scare for Gingrich

Seoul: Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, was forced to cancel a briefing at the demilitarised zone, dividing North and South Korea after a North Korean soldier carrying a rifle was spotted in the area. Mr Gingrich, touring Asia, said later America was committed to the defence of South Korea, where 37,000 US troops guard the border. (Reuters)

Villagers free Shell hostages

Lagos: Shell Oil says that 31 of its staff and contractors held in Nigeria by feuding communities have been freed. A spokesman said that 90 people were still being detained at six flow stations which the villagers have occupied since the weekend in protest against the relocation of local government headquarters. (Reuters)

Party ousts Milosevic foe

Belgrade: Milo Djukanovic, pro-Western premier of Montenegro, resigned from the ruling pro-Serbian Socialist Party after coming under harsh criticism for attacking President Milosevic of Serbia. His removal suggests that Mr Milosevic is regaining political strength. (AP)

Russia arrests officer as spy

Moscow: Russia's Federal Security Service has caught a senior officer in the strategic missile command who was preparing to sell defence secrets to a foreign power, Russian news agencies reported, but provided no further details. (Reuters)

Paris to rebuild memorial for last martyr to liberty

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

PARIS city authorities have agreed to erect a new memorial to the last Frenchman executed for "crimes of impiety", more than two centuries after he was born at the stake and 56 years after the Nazis melted down an original bronze statue depicting his martyrdom.

François-Jean Le Fèvre, better known as the Chevalier de La Barre, was put to death in 1766 and later became a potent symbol of the excesses of religious intolerance. Recent electoral advances by the extreme right-wing National Front, coupled with fears that bigotry is again on the rise, have led to a renewal of interest in the short life and brutal death of La Barre, one of France's most celebrated lay martyrs.

The execution of the Chevalier de La Barre, at the age of 20, was a grisly affair. Accused of mutilating a crucifix, he was sentenced to have his tongue torn out, his hand severed and his head cut off before being burnt in two separate instalments.

Among other blasphemies, La Barre was charged with singing impious songs and failing to take off his hat to a passing procession of Capuchin friars, but his only "crime" appears to have been membership of a rowdy "group of young people" with advanced ideas about individual liberty. His supporters included Voltaire, who vowed to fight "the monster of intolerance" and noted that the gruesome barbarities inflicted on the young man "took place not in the 13th or 14th centuries, but in the 18th".

The great French lawyer Simon Linguet mounted a stirring but ineffective defence of "this unfortunate child, prostrate at the feet of the judge". The Chevalier was rehabilitated as a hero after the French Revolution in 1789. La Barre's tragic end inspired numerous books and a cult following, and in 1905 Georges Clemenceau, shortly before he became Prime Minister, unveiled a bronze statue to his memory. In 1941, however, the occupying Nazi troops melted it down to provide bronze for the German war effort. Only the plinth commemorating La Barre remains at the foot of Sacré-Coeur basilica in Montmartre.

"The memory of this young

man deserves to be given another monument worthy of his name," said Claudine Tallhades, founder of the new International Chevalier de La Barre Association. "La Barre symbolises all that is freedom of expression, of thought, of conscience, because he, the moment there is a resurgence of religious and political fanaticism linked to the rise of the Far-Right."

Earlier this month the local council in the 18th arrondissement of Paris voted that one million francs (£125,000) be spent on a new monument, but disagreement emerged over what type of memorial was appropriate.

The Paris Office of Culture insists that "a more stimulating concept" than the doomed man strapped to a stake should be found.



See the sport on TV last night?

Last night on Channel 4 News a new report highlighted the barbaric sport of bear baiting in Pakistan.

It described how day after day, bears are dragged into a bloody arena to face pairs of cross-bred bull terriers. Each bear has had his teeth ripped out and claws blunted, leaving him at the mercy of the dogs' vicious teeth. The trainer won't let him be killed, but the bear doesn't know this. Over and over again, he is fighting for his life.

Over 2,000 bear-baitings take place each year in Pakistan, despite the fact that they are now banned by law.

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Holy Land riots force pilgrims to cancel Easter tours

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Foreign Office warned British travellers yesterday to avoid the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Palestinians clashed with Israeli troops in the West Bank for the sixth successive day.

As the protests against the building of Jewish homes at far Homa, in annexed east Jerusalem, escalated, Israel's chief of Staff said, "It will mean war" if Palestinians take up arms. The protests and last week's suicide-bomb attack at Tel Aviv are beginning to have an effect on Israel's tourism industry. A leading Christian clergyman in Jerusalem said Easter in the Holy Land had become "a dead season", with thousands of pilgrims rushing to cancel bookings.

Bishop Kamal-Hanna Bakhsh, deputy head of the Roman Catholic Church, told members of the Foreign Press Association: "Everyone who was planning to visit for Easter celebrations and has been able to cancel has done so. There is also a risk that if the violence continues for a long period, it could affect plans by millions of pilgrims to mark the millennium, what we call The Great Jubilee, in the Holy Land."

The threat of more violence over Har Homa was depicted in freshly painted slogans from Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement. New army and police roadblocks have sprouted throughout Israel to prevent more suicide attacks, and armed police guard the near empty streets of the Old City.

"There is no one coming to the shops. There is a bad feeling that the intifada is going to begin all over again," said the owner of one trinket store close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Samir Michel, Christian manager of the 51-room Patriarchate guesthouse, said: "Usually at this time of year we are bursting with guests, but this Easter we are less than half full. The whole new feeling of insecurity is impossible to overcome and people are cancelling all the time. I am afraid it is hard to convince our pilgrims abroad who have seen images on TV that Netanyahu is not a warmonger." He was referring to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister.

Already one tourist bus has been badly stoned in Bethlehem and yesterday the entrance to the self-rule town

where Jesus was born was once again transformed into a dangerous battleground with hundreds of Palestinian youths attacking Israeli troops guarding the tomb of the biblical matriarch, Rachel.

Some of the rioters were wearing gas masks to counter clouds of teargas and others were using catapults to fire stones at the troops. By nightfall, more than 25 Palestinians had been wounded by rubber bullets fired by the Israelis and the Voice of Palestine radio reported that nearly 100 had been taken to hospital suffering from teargas inhalation.

More clashes also took place in Hebron, the disputed West Bank city, with about 200 Palestinians attempting to storm centrally located buildings occupied by 450 militant Jewish settlers until they were forced back by Palestinian police.

Senior Palestine Liberation Organisation officials angrily denied claims by the Israeli authorities that they had been responsible for organising the rioting. But yesterday leaders of Fatah, the largest PLO faction, announced detailed plans for escalating the conflict against the Har Homa



A Palestinian wearing a gas mask hurries back a teargas grenade at Israeli soldiers as a sixth consecutive day of riots engulfed the West Bank

settlement. The Fatah leadership announced that it is returning to the state of struggle against Israel suspended since the 1993 peace deal, which is now in tatters. The Yeshua Council repre-

senting 144,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip condemned the plan and called on Mr Netanyahu to take immediate action. The plea came as the Foreign Office announced

in London: "Travel to the West Bank and Gaza Strip should be confined to essential visits for the time being." Officials added that Britons on vital trips to Israel and the occupied territories had been asked to

carry their passports at all times because of the many checkpoints in operation. The Foreign Office added: "All visitors should note that passengers boarding flights in Israel can be subject to lengthy

personal questioning by security officials." Britons have been advised to keep track of local events and contact the British Consulate in Jerusalem or tour representatives if they need help.

Teenagers talk their way out of a family suicide pact

FROM RICHARD CLEROUX IN OTTAWA

THREE teenagers talked their way out of a suicide pact with their parents who were involved with a death cult.

Five members of the Order of the Solar Temple Sect committed suicide after setting their home on fire in St Camille, a village 50 miles west of Quebec City. The teenagers had persuaded their parents that they should be allowed to spend the night in a shed on the property, while the adults went ahead.

The five adults, one Canadian, two French and two Swiss, were discovered by firemen in the blazing house. The cult believes that their sins can be exiated only through death

by fire, which launches them on a mystic trip to the star Sirius where they are reborn. The suicide must take place either during the spring or autumn equinox.

The children were to have been included, without their knowledge, in the suicide on Thursday night but the electronic mechanism the adults had set up to fire two propane tanks did not work and was discovered by the teenagers.

Réal Ouellet, a Quebec Police spokesman, said: "The youngsters talked to their parents, saying that they did not want to go on this voyage." The family discussed the matter at length, and finally

the parents, Didier Quéze and his wife, Chantal Goupillot, both French nationals, allowed their children to stay behind.

The children, boys aged 13 and 16 and a girl of 14, were given drugs which made them semi-conscious and were told that when they woke up the following day, their parents, another couple, and their grandmother would all be on the star Sirius.

Firemen found the burned bodies of the parents sitting cross-legged on an upstairs bed next to the bodies of a Swiss couple, Bruno Klaus and Pauline Rioux. Police found a fifth body,

that of the grandmother, Suzanne Druau, on a couch. She had a plastic bag over her head, leading police to believe that she might have been murdered.

The sect received worldwide attention in October, 1994, when 53 members died in a combination of murders and suicides at a ski resort in Quebec and two villages in Switzerland.

Almost a year later 16 cult members including several children, died in a remote French Alpine village.

Police are watching 35 other members of the cult in Canada in the hope of preventing copycat suicides.

Bush fulfils promise to bale out for fun

FROM ASSOCIATED PRESS IN YUMA, ARIZONA

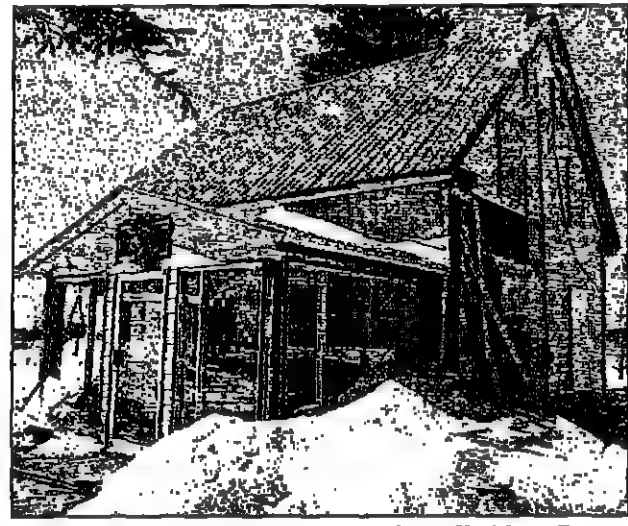
HALF a century after he baled out of a Second World War torpedo-bomber, George Bush, the former President, fulfilled a promise to himself by strapping on a parachute and jumping from an aircraft yesterday - just for fun.

With the blessing of his wife, Barbara, Mr Bush, 72, jumped from a civilian plane 12,500ft above the US Army's Yuma Proving Ground. He deployed his orange, yellow and blue parachute at 4,500ft. Two jump masters held a harness attached to his body until he opened his chute.

As Mr Bush touched down,

apparently none the worse for his adventure, about half a dozen people rushed to assist him. Emergency medical personnel were standing by on the ground but their services were not required.

Eight other parachutists jumped with the former President, who was fulfilling the promise he made that he would someday skydive just for fun on September 2, 1944, as he baled out of his bullet-torn torpedo-bomber over the Pacific Ocean. His two crewmates were killed when the aircraft was struck by fire from the Japanese Navy.



The house where five cult members died in a fire

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Leader flees Papua siege disguised as policeman

FROM NOEL PASCOE IN PORT MORESBY

THE Papua New Guinea Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, was smuggled out of parliament yesterday, apparently disguised as a policeman, as more than a thousand protesters and armed rebel soldiers besieged the building.

Chris Haiveta, the Deputy Prime Minister, is believed to have slipped out shortly afterwards and eight other MPs escaped during the night, but more than 80 remained trapped inside. Sir Julius was smuggled out shortly after defeating, by 58-39, a motion calling for his resignation.

Major Walter Enuma, the rebel commander, had promised that the siege would be lifted, claiming: "We respect the law of the land. The parliament has made its decision and the military will respect it."

However, soldiers were still at the gates early today searching cars carrying media and parliamentary employees out of the building. One group of soldiers told the *Post-Courier* that they would not remove the roadblocks or end their vigil until the Prime Minister resigned. They added that they would not listen to Major Enuma either.

Four prominent opposition MPs went to the front gate to urge the crowd to disperse and go home. They reportedly told them that they would try to

reintroduce the resignation motion in parliament later today.

Opposition speakers, acknowledging that they could not force Sir Julius to resign, appealed to the Prime Minister and the 97 MPs present during the debate to "listen to the voices of the people" and vote according to their conscience. But they failed to convince the government backbenchers.

The motion against Sir Julius was introduced in parliament by Bill Skate, leader of the Opposition and Governor of Port Moresby, the capital. He told parliament that the nation was divided and its international credibility was in tatters because Sir Julius had called in mercenaries to put down a rebellion in Bougainville without consulting the Cabinet.

"This is not about politics," he said. "Unless we appoint a caretaker prime minister to oversee the establishment of a commission of inquiry and to lead us into the next election, our country is heading for anarchy."

Sir Julius ended the debate by commending the two leaders for their "responsible debate", adding: "We must never compromise the constitution of this country. There comes a time when big issues arise and you will have to make a decision. I accepted that responsibility and I will not pass it on to another person. I accept it absolutely."

Colonel Reg Renagi, the acting Chief of Staff of the Defence Force, last night reassured the public that the army accepted the decision of parliament.

"This signifies that democracy is alive and well in PNG," he said. "The parliamentary process under the constitution has been tested. The integrity of the [defence force] has also been tested and has proven... that the force has a duty to uphold and protect the constitution."



Sir Julius: survived vote demanding resignation

Italy to lead 'Club Med' intervention force in Albania

DAVID BRANCH/AP

FROM RICHARD OWEN AND CHARLES BRENNER IN ROME



A fisherman prepares his nets in the Albanian port of Durres while two boats blaze after refugees who failed to start their engines set them on fire

A "CLUB MED" military force preparing to intervene in Albania to protect humanitarian aid convoys will be spearheaded by an Italian force of 5,000 men. Italian defence officials said yesterday. "It is clear that, because of British and German opposition, the southern Europeans will have to go it alone," one official said.

European Union leaders meeting in Rome yesterday were divided over Albania. Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, said his country would not send any forces. "Europe is unanimous that it is not right to send soldiers on a large-scale Albania," he said.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said there was no question of "sending an army" to the Balkan state, but some countries could send limited police contingent.

After Bashkim Fino, the Albanian Prime Minister, met EU ministers, Lamberto Dini, the Italian Foreign Minister, said he hoped a decision would be made within days on the size of an EU security contingent. "We are preparing with other countries... to give security protection to civilians we are sending with the EU to Albania," he said. "We don't intend to... operate on our own."

Convicted killer 'burnt alive' in bungled Florida execution

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

AN ELECTRIC chair execution went badly wrong yesterday when a convicted man's head burst into flames after being jolted by the high-voltage power charge from Florida's notorious "Old Sparky".

Pedro Medina, 39, a Cuban emigre who was sentenced to death for the murder of a schoolmaster in 1982, had just uttered his last words — "I am still innocent" — when flames up to a foot long shot from the side of his skull and smoke poured out of his face mask.

As wardens rushed to cut the power, the flames continued to flicker eerily over the dead man's face for ten seconds. Witnesses in the execution chamber viewing booth at Starke prison, near Jackson-

ville, also described the room filling with a foul-smelling smoke.

"It was brutal, terrible, a burning alive, literally," one of them, Michael Minerva, said.

Florida's Governor Lawton Chiles asked the state's Corrections Department to make an immediate review of the use of "Old Sparky", the ageing oak electric chair. It is not the first time that the device has malfunctioned. An earlier incident in 1990 led to a temporary halt to executions.

Linda Thurston, head of Amnesty International's campaign to abolish the death penalty, said in New York yesterday: "This was a horrifying spectacle and merely demonstrates that we are allowing

the state to murder people."

The unpleasantness of the execution will lead to renewed protests from opponents of the death penalty. Mr Thurston added: "Any method of execution is horrifying. We have had botched executions by lethal injection also."

Larry Spalding of the American Civil Liberties Union, which also opposes capital punishment, said: "There is zero chance of abolishing the death penalty in Florida."

The electric chair is used by only 11 of the 38 jurisdictions in the US which permit capital punishment. Florida has put 39 convicts to death since 1976, when capital punishment was reintroduced. The state has some 450 people on its death row.

US in \$2bn China deals

Beijing: US Vice-President Al Gore and Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, yesterday presided over the signing of two multimillion-dollar deals that diplomats here see as showing that Sino-American relations are back on a much stronger footing (James Pringle writes).

In one deal, Air China, the country's international carrier, agreed to spend more than \$700 million (\$433 million) on passenger jets from Boeing.

In the other, General Motors agreed a \$1.5 billion joint venture with a Shanghai factory to build medium-sized cars in China.

In both cases, envoys said, the deals had been held up since 1995 because of strains in relations over Taiwan. During that time China pointedly purchased a fleet of European Airbus.

Inkatha men guilty of Christmas massacre

FROM INIGO GELMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

THIRTEEN Inkatha Freedom Party supporters were yesterday convicted on charges of murder and attempted murder in the massacre of 18 African National Congress rivals on Christmas Day, 1995. The judgment could have serious implications for Chief Mangosuthu Buthe's ruling party.

Among those convicted in connection with the Shobashobane massacre in KwaZulu-Natal was Sipho Ngobho, the local Inkatha leader. In passing judgment in Durban high court, Judge Hilary Squires said the attack was politically motivated.

The conviction of its supporters is a blow to the Zulu-dominated Inkatha's image. The party has sought to cast itself as the victim in the

region's conflict where more than 15,000 people have died since the mid-1980s. Since local elections last June an uneasy peace has prevailed.

The judgment could undermine attempts by the party to revive its political fortunes for elections in 1999. Inkathas have been losing ground steadily to the ANC in the province.

Chief Justice's plea: Elias Sitya, 26, the self-confessed killer of two British tourists, Elizabeth Over and Julie Goodwin, yesterday begged his victim's families to forgive him for the 1992 attack. Sibiya said he had been driven to kill them at a remote beach in Mapumad because of a hatred for whites. He said his family had been expelled from their home when he was five-years-old and he had since hated whites.

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ANDRÉS RENDÓN / REUTERS

Mayor counts the cost of home rule for Washington

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

MARION BARRY, the Mayor of Washington, said yesterday that the battle to win "home rule" for the United States capital 23 years ago had been a "Trojan horse" and had led to near bankruptcy for the city.

Mr Barry, one of the firebrands who mobilised the black community in the 1970s to win the right to manage Washington independently of the federal Government, says that, in retrospect, he would not have struck the deal.

His remarks during a panel discussion on whether Washington can be saved from descent into squalor and crime came as tourists poured into the city for the cherry blossom festival when the banks of the Potomac are lined with flowering trees.

A further sign of the city's decline emerged with the news that its tuberculosis cases increased by 36 per cent last year, although the rest of the US showed declines.

Mr Barry said that the number of potholes in the roads had reached 45,000, nearly one for every 10 residents. He has set up a Pothole Hotline but said that the city lacked any repair funds.

Washington's problem is that its mass industry — government — pays no taxes, either on property or employment. The cost of servicing its

population, three quarters black, is soaring but revenues are plunging as middle-class residents flee to the suburbs where there is less crime and lower taxes.

Hope for the District rose in December when President Clinton committed himself to save the capital by forcing the federal Government to take over responsibility for prisons, ports, and some medical care and prisons. But the Bill now faces a tough passage through Congress, as senators and representatives are reluctant to give funds to a region from which they get no votes.

Congress is also critical of Mr Barry's administration, which has been regularly accused of corruption. Andrew



Barry: independence has been a "Trojan horse"

Brimmer, chairman of the Control Board installed last year to make the city balance its budget, said yesterday that a survey of District managers showed virtually none performing to adequate levels.

Carol O'Clairacain of the Brookings Institution, a specialist in Washington's problems, added that the District was so inefficiently run it could not even collect its 20 different taxes and 115 fees and fines and should scrap many of them.

It emerged yesterday that Mr Barry's ex-wife, Mary Treadwell, who served 15 months in federal prison on a 1983 fraud conviction, and who is currently an employee of his office, has failed to account for \$11,000 in community funds. She has denied mishandling city money.

An angry Mr Barry, who has been Mayor for most of the District's experiment in home rule, during which he was jailed for possession of "crack" cocaine, said that criticisms of management were a "sideshow".

However, Eleanor Holmes-Norton, Washington's non-voting member of the House of Representatives, said that the problems should be solvable because the city was so small. "New York is a tough city to turn round" she said. "Washington is peanuts."

Galleon found with \$4bn treasure

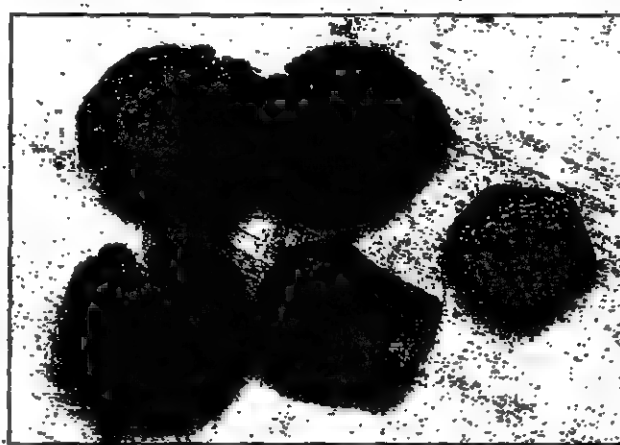
BY GABRIELLA GAMINI SOUTH AMERICA CORRESPONDENT

TREASURE hunters have discovered remnants of a long sought Spanish galleon with a cargo of gold and silver coins which sank in 1654 off the coast of Ecuador.

The bounty that sank aboard the galleon *Capitana Jesús María de la Limpia Concepción* in the Pacific Ocean is believed to be worth \$4 billion (£2.5 billion). It has lured dozens of salvage companies which are now disputing the right to dive for the treasure. An Ecuadorian company, using electronic-detection equipment, was the first to locate parts of the 100 ft vessel, including an anchor and a cannon.

"We spent a year diving and finally discovered what we were looking for. The currents have dispersed the shipwreck across a large area," Rony Almeida, an Ecuadorian diver, said.

But a Norwegian company, La Capitana Invest, and two American treasure-hunting companies, Underwater Salvage and Maritime Explorer, are among the contenders bidding for a licence from the



Five silver coins recovered from the vessel by divers

Ecuadorian Government to salvage the treasure. The licence is expected to be granted to the highest bidder, which gets the right to 50 per cent of the bounty.

The state keeps 50 per cent of the value of the silver coins and gold bars and all relics found. Cristóbal Mancayo, chief of marine police, said.

The *Capitana Jesús María* was sailing from Lima, in Peru, towards Panama. It sank after setting off from a stopover in the Ecuadorian port of Guayaquil. Historians claim the 1,200-tonne ship, chartered by the Spanish Crown, was also carrying

emeralds and religious statues besides gold and silver.

Ecuadorian Navy vessels are presently patrolling the area where the wreck is thought to lie. "We want to make sure that none of the treasure goes astray," a naval spokesman said.

The cash-strapped Government has said it would spend the \$2 billion it expected to earn from the treasure on social programmes.

Historians say at least 20 Spanish ships carrying gold from the mines of Potosí, Bolivia, sank off Ecuador. The *Capitana Jesús María* is the first wreck to be found.

Ships built to carry New World spoils

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

THE *Capitana Jesús María de la Limpia Concepción* was typical of the 17th century galleons used by Spaniards to bring home spoils from their empire in the New World.

Broad of beam, the 100 ft vessel would have carried a cargo of about 1,000 tonnes, an 800-strong crew of sailors and soldiers, as well as an assortment of cannons to ward off marauding pirates. Contemporary sources also describe the ship as a vessel of outstanding beauty.

According to Gervasio Artimano's *La Arquitectura Naval Española*, the definitive account of ships of the imperial age, published in 1920 — a galleon "had to serve as much for war as for trade" and was better-equipped to stand up to the elements than all other ships of the time.

Yet the broad-beamed galleons were clumsy and slow, often falling prey to the smaller and swifter boats of buccaniers. It was against such foes, however, that the *Capitana*

Jesús María saw its most famous action. In September 1629, the ship that now lies on the seabed off Guayaquil led a Spanish assault on the Caribbean island of Nevis, then the bastion of some troublesome Dutch *vrijbuiter* or "freebooters".

The galleon's captain, Tiburcio Redín, was an impetuous man, and accounts tell of how he sailed his ship too close to the shore, exposing its flanks to fire from the pirates' cannons. The galleon had to be rescued by other ships from the Spanish fleet, and Captain Redín was temporarily relieved of his duties.

Patched up after the skirmish at Nevis, the galleon continued to sail between America and Spain, carrying bullion from mines in Potosí to the Spanish Treasury. These cargoes of gold were responsible for the inflation that rocked Spain in the 17th century, sinking its economy as surely as the galleon herself was sunk in 1654.

Yearly cancer checks urged

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

WOMEN in their forties should be screened for breast cancer every year, the American Cancer Society said, in a finding that sharpened an increasingly intense debate over the issue.

The recommendation differs significantly from the advice offered in January by a panel of experts convened by the National Cancer Institute, which said the available evidence did not justify annual mammograms under the age of 50.

Instantly, the women

should decide for themselves, a verdict that was widely criticised.

The government-run cancer institute and the privately-funded cancer society are by far the most influential groups offering guidelines to Americans about steps they should take to avoid and control cancer.

Until now, the society has urged mammograms every year of two for women between 40 and 50. The change to recommending an annual test is intended to save lives

and end the confusion, the society said.

In Britain, research has been under way for two years to determine the benefits of screening women between 40 and 50, according to a spokesman at the Department of Health in London.

At present, British women between 50 and 64 are offered a mammogram on the National Health Service every three years. Those under 50 can receive a mammogram only if a GP thinks it is needed.

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The suit that loves a drama



Looking back, I am astonished that I didn't own a white suit the first time around. The risky combination of an iron will, an unshakable confidence in my own faultless taste and a daring and generous mother meant that as a teenager I was able to succumb in some style to most of the grimmer fashion excesses of the early Eighties. I had, in those days, a museum-standard collection of ethnic blouses, a glittery boob tube, a purple tank top, a flamenco-style frock from Wallis, and pair of navy jersey hotpants (very classical, I thought at the time), which I wore under a navy PVC trench coat.

I do remember wanting a white trouser suit quite badly. Whether it was the olive curve of Bianca Jagger's breast beneath the creamy jacket in her wedding pictures, or Faye Dunaway, looking elegantly murderous in pristine tailoring, that brought on the desire I cannot now recall. But I never did get one.

This will have been because my mother thought it would show the dirt. Open to persuasion on most subjects ("No, honestly, it isn't slit unsuitably high. Mummy. Oh don't be ridiculous, of course you can't see what colour they are. Well, what if I sewed it up a little bit?") she was implacable where showing the dirt was concerned.

In later life, the legacy of the maternal firm line on the impracticality of pale colours is clearly visible in my summer wardrobe, which spans the spectrum from dead white to ecru, putty, stone and taupe. Embarking on the Great Spring Wardrobe Change-over, I am astounded every year by the luxurious monochrome heap that tumbles from its winter resting-place. Gracious me, I annually think. What lovely things. Now why do I never wear any of them? Closer inspection reveals why not: the indelible yellowish streaks on the front of the cashmere cardigan that I washed and left to dry in the glare of the sun; the abstract squiggle left by an expansive gesture with a felt-tip on the front of a cream silk tunic; the pavement-dragged hem of a pair of cloud-grey satin Oxford bags... A riot of sullied purity enough to bring a smile to the lips of the Marquis de Sade. But each new season has found me, undeterred, adding

to my pallid collection. Until now. To my utter amazement, I find myself unmoved by the pages of white suits in the glossy magazines. I simply do not feel the need for this year's biggest catwalk hit. What is the matter with me? Am I growing old? Is the next step a hairdo like the Queen's and a collection of extra-wide-fitting shoes in navy leatherette with arch supports?

Examining my conscience, I really don't think so. It is not the trashiness of white suits that I don't fancy. On the contrary, I adore trash and only refrain from coming to work every day in a teeny-weeny Little Miss Trouble T-shirt because I know that my son, who has taken over from his grandfather as my very own sartorial policeman, on catching sight of it, would infallibly bellow, *You're not thinking of going out dressed like that, I hope.*

I think advancing years and motherhood must have turned me sentimental, because the thing that now strikes me about white suits is their shocking vulnerability. The sight of all that pristine blue-white acetate at Conran, and crunchy milk-white wool at MaxMara and the tender peach-bloom crêpe de Chine at Austin Reed reminds me of nothing so much as a maternity ward full of new-born babies whose skin you hardly dare expose to the harsh touch of the outside air, it is so new and fragile.

They hang on the shop rails like perfect fruit, but if you look closely, the process of decay has already begun — a grubby fingerprint on the lapel; a grimy tide-mark at the cuff; a smear of make-up at the collar. If they look like this in the shop, imagine how they'll be after half a day's wear.

Most high fashion looks can be persuaded to reach some kind of comfortable accommodation with the quotidian — a longer skirt, a flesh-coloured lining... But in this case, the only possible compromise involves a semi-permanent billet at the dry-cleaners, and being surrounded, when wearing it, by a disagreeable miasma of Scotchguard. White suits don't understand the word compromise. Their natural role is a once-only starring appearance at some human drama with a messy and inevitable outcome: an awards ceremony, a wedding — or a massacre.

'I simply do not feel the need for this year's biggest catwalk hit'

White heat

Impractical but dazzling, the white trouser suit is a summer must. Grace Bradberry, Style Editor, chooses three of the best



Whistles jacket, £265, and trousers, £135



French Connection jacket, £143, and trousers, £70



John Richmond jacket, £336, and trousers, £163, Selfridges

PHOTOGRAPHER: KEN COLE; STYLIST: DOROTHY SHAW; HAIR AND MAKE-UP: SHINE BURN; MODEL: TONYA...

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Why modelling is such a class act

NOT for a long time has class mattered so much in fashion. When designers choose a "face" for their advertising campaigns, the model's social pedigree, as well as her portfolio, appears to be under consideration. At one end of the spectrum there is Stella Tennant, granddaughter of the Duchess of Devonshire. At the other there's Jayne Windsor, a single mother of two who was talent-spotted by Select model agency on the streets of Newcastle.

What's fascinating is who's matching up with whom. After a year-long love affair with Stella Tennant, Chanel, whose image is as *haute* as haute couture gets, has switched tack altogether. The next advertising contract has gone to Karen Elson, a 19-year-old from Manchester, whose looks are the antithesis of aristocratic.

She has bone-white skin and a face like a porcelain doll — but with a hint of Oriental.

Not everyone in the fashion world finds her brand of suburban *jolie laide* appealing, but Karl Lagerfeld, Chanel's designer, is clearly convinced. What's more curious is that Alexander McQueen, whose first GivENCHY ready-to-wear line took suburban trash to the limit, should be courting Honor Fraser as his favoured "face".

True, they have been friends since McQueen started out, and true. Honor was a protégé of McQueen's muse, Isabella Blow, but the sister of Lord Lovat remains the bluest of the blue bloods. She has been fostering a new "street" image, but retains the arrogant walk.

The one wild card left in the pack is John Galiano, head of Dior. As yet there is no "face" for the clothes, as opposed to the perfumes. But it can only be a matter of time before Galiano is forced to choose between 'umble and *haute*.

GRACE BRADBERRY

'Givenchy's favoured face is now Honor Fraser'

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'You've Been Famed'

Angus Deayton shows us how the stars got started. Interview by Valerie Grove

Before *They Were Famous* is such an obvious idea for a television show you wonder why it hasn't been done before. Videotapes of household names making their debuts on screen — a sort of "You've Been Famed", an embarrassment. Naturally the Americans thought of it first. But on Easter Monday Angus Deayton and the BBC will allow us to mock the on-screen beginnings of the rich and famous.

We shall see a schoolboy Michael Jagger scowling at the presenter of *Seeing Sport* in 1959, Peter Cook as an extra in the film *Bachelor of Hears*, 1967, Clint Eastwood in a "Drunk Milk" commercial in 1954, Ben Kingsley in *Coronation Street*, Steve Martin in the US equivalent of *Blind Date*, Joanna Lumley modelling cashmere, David Bowie interviewed by Cliff Michelmore — "You've got rather long hair" — in 1964, a prepubescent Naomi Campbell, Jeremy Irons on *Play Away*, Emma Thompson in a bikini.

Some are not embarrassing at all, they are just rather sweet, like old passport photographs: Stephen Fry wrestling with an answer on *University Challenge*; and Hugh Laurie as oarsman in the Cambridge crew on *Boat Race Day*.

"We've only scratched the surface," Deayton says. "As soon as we looked into it, we realised there's a wealth of material to be trawled through. Advertising agencies keep old tapes of people auditioning for commercials, aspiring actors play extras in sitcoms or characters in soaps."

A rich seam is mined in the footage of TV reporters before they acquired their cool: bikini-clad Sue Lawley interviewing on a beach, Kate Adie prancing in a mob cap, Jeremy Paxman wearing a vintage 1974 smirk and, perhaps most wonderfully of all, Anna Ford as a guitar-playing folk singer in 1969 when she was Union president at Manchester University.

Deayton's friend Nick Hancock is the programme's fall guy: it seems he once did ads for beer, wearing a smirking smile which "although I know and love Nick, still makes me want to punch him". But Deayton himself can be seen cavorting with a bowl of Crunchy Nut Cornflakes, and there are plenty more of those in his cupboard of skeletons.

Before he was famous, that is how Deayton got by. "Appearing on ads was what everyone did, as a struggling actor or comedian. I spent years and years doing things like that — awful commercials, loads of radio, and scriptwriting for other people — before anyone ever heard of me. I won an award for Most Promising Newcomer on the fourteenth anniversary of my life in showbusiness."

We are in the boardroom of Talkback, Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones's production company which handles Deayton's PR. (The comedy scene is now so interlinked with PR and production companies you wonder how they work out who gets 10 per cent of whom.) Angus does not have a production company: "It strikes me as too much like hard work — worrying about office rental space, secretaries and A&P's." But we know his newfound wealth has turned him into a big spender. He drives a Lexus coupe, and when he turned 40 last year he invited 100 friends to dine on oysters and lobster in the Eiffel Tower.

He is wearing funeral black, unlike the



Angus Deayton won an award for "Most Promising Newcomer" on the fourteenth anniversary of his life in showbusiness

challenging jackets he wears on screen, and carrying a distressed briefcase borrowed from his girlfriend's mother.

The girlfriend, since the acrimonious split with Stephanie de Sykes, is the American scriptwriter Lise Mayer, who met 17 years ago on *The Young Ones* and with whom he now lives in Islington.

Deayton (like Ralph Fiennes, a name invariably mispronounced by the unwary; it rhymes with Beeton) grew up in Surrey, the indulged third of three sons of an insurance man and a schoolteacher. After Caterham School, he read modern languages at New College, Oxford, where he did no performing until his fellow undergraduate and budding scriptwriter Richard Curtis (*Four Weddings, Blackadder*) said someone had dropped out, could he come to the Edinburgh Festival? Deayton says he has never been more terrified in his life, but he acquired the taste for comic performance.

When the first series of *Have I Got News For You?* started in 1990, Deayton was again a last-minute stand-in when John Lloyd decided not to present it. Opportunity knocked for Angus Deayton at 35. He was known to radio comedy aficionados, but his profile was decidedly

low. "I'd always played the parody game-show host and presenter" — in *Radio Active* on Radio 4, and as "Mike Channel" the anchorman of KYTV — "so it was odd to do it for real. With an element of pastiche of course." After two series, his deadpan delivery of carefully scripted adlibs (in a manner often described as pedagogic, contrasting with the unruly, anarchic rude boys Ian Hislop and Paul Merton) began to achieve for him something quite unexpected: crumpet status.

I remember thinking that this must be what attractive women have to put up with all the time — getting stared at in the street. People think the screen is still there and point a finger in your face and say "You're Angus Deayton," or talk about you loudly as if you're not there. Some deal with this better than others: Alexei Sayle isn't at all bothered, but Rowan Atkinson is cringing shy. I'm somewhere in between: fighting fit shy. At times I just feel it would be nice to get away to Phuket. Living well is the best revenge: he and Lise flew off yesterday for Easter on the beaches of Phuket.

Perhaps it is fair that a cavalier

exploiter of others' notoriety should have been bruised by the glare fame. "We never set out to undermine anyone, but the audience decides whether they like someone within five minutes." They loved Jennifer Paterson; they did not love Piers Morgan. "Politicians get the worst ride; but Charles Kennedy said that being seen to do well on HIGNFY was worth ten political broadcasts — people told him later they'd vote for him. We once got hauled over the coals for having too many Labour MPs, so we invited the entire Tory Cabinet but they all declined. Do you think Tony or John would do the show in the next few weeks?"

Next Monday's show will doubtless be the first of many. "It will be clipped, as we say in the business. When we have enough clips we'll do another one — a bit like *I'll Be Alright On The Night*." The clip I'd like to see is Deayton with Phil Pope and Michael Fenton Stevens, singing *Meaningless Songs in Very High Voices*, a spoof BeeGees act (the BeeGees' music, which got them into the Australian hit parade in the early 1980s, but that was before he was famous).

● Before *They Were Famous*, BBC1, Easter Monday, 9pm.

A good intention that has gone awry

The muddle over Ms

If I'm being honest, I have to say I don't much care if I'm called Miss. Mrs or Ms. That's not to say I think it doesn't matter. Obviously how we name people, the way in which we categorise them, has significance. Make too much of that nowadays, though, and you're dead meat. Business and Professional Women UK — an organisation no one's ever heard of before — comes out strongly against the would-be universal female title Ms, claiming it smacks of Seventies feminism, all overt aggression, hairy legs and baggy dungarees, and everyone is falling over themselves to say how much they despise the term, have nothing but contempt for it and its coinage and are only too happy to give it up.

Perhaps it was slightly disingenuous to say that I didn't care what people call me. It's true that I don't mind so much how I'm styled, but it does rankle that I'm asked in the first place. When Ms was introduced to the language of officialdom, the idea was well-intentioned: there should be a way of addressing — identifying — women who didn't define or describe themselves in terms of their relationship with men. (Interestingly, the coinage of the term was not political, but economic: it was formulated, apparently, by mail-order companies in 1950s America to cut costs.)

But no sooner was the formula officially adopted in the Seventies, that it was sneered at from a great height. And who's surprised? I'm not referring to the inevitability of anti-feminism either. Even if you're basically well-disposed, as I am, it's impossible to ignore the sheer idiocy of introducing — as a simplifying factor — an unpronounceable appellation. It sounds ridiculous, so it is easy to see why it has been ridiculed.

But underneath the idea makes sense. And I emphasise, the idea was not to suggest that marriage is a bad thing and, that one should therefore avoid having a tag that denoted the married state. Nor was it to imply that by distinguishing between single and married women, one was somehow cruelly drawing attention to the pitiable and lacking status of the former. The message behind Ms, if you like, was this: men are not addressed differently depending on whether they're married or not; nor should women be.

The fuss everyone made. The fuss they continue to make. Anyone would think they were forced to adopt this ungainly clumsy mode of address. But no one is. And of course they shouldn't be, but once the term, any term, is not universal, then it cannot make sense. When I'm filling out a form, which obliges me to describe my status, it makes a mockery of having

"Ms" if it is just an option, rather than the usual female title. In other words, I am being asked to tick whether I'm single, married or just a bolshy cow. I go for bolshy cow every time.

Even if, as the Business and Professional Women UK organisation seems to want, "Miss" is chosen as universal designator of women, it'll make no difference: forms will still say "Miss", "Mrs" or "other". So what's the point? But maybe one can never change things that affect people deeply (and what could affect people more deeply than what they are called?) by such artificial and official means.

But I suspect there has to be some change soon, and one that will come about organically. A great many women, like myself, are not changing their names on marriage. When I give my name for whatever official purpose, I am irritated by being asked "Miss or Mrs?" (I always answer "whichever you like"), but I am flummoxed, too. After all, the truth is I am married, but I use what's called my single name, although I prefer to call it, simply, my name. (When I was in hospital after my first baby, my brother came to visit me and arrived eventually at the ward, having had arguments with reception about whether I existed. At last he found me, as he exasperatedly told me, "under your own name".)

All that makes it very difficult, I do see: it's confusing for everyone. I agree it doesn't really matter what's settled upon, Miss or Mrs: I agree impossible in ordinary speech. It can be used only ironically. On the whole, and because I wear a wedding ring, I am called Mrs. This is fine by me, although I am aware of the Freudian implications of having a name that makes one sound as if one could be married to one's own father.

Irritated though I am by suggestions that what is wrong with Ms is that it makes us sound like nasty, men-hating feminists, it is true that it hasn't worked. I still hold that it is significant how we are styled, but I accept that it's better to take the Battering Barbara line. While serving on a committee, Dame Barbara Castle was asked whether she preferred to be known as "chairman" or "chairwoman". "I don't care what I'm called," she replied, "as long as I'm in charge".

It appears that father-of-the-year Michael Jackson — stung by suggestions that his marriage might be a complete sham — is at some pains to show that it, the baby and his new family life are all completely straight up. It's all, he tells OK! this week, absolutely genuine. To prove it, he claims having a new baby is bliss "24 hours a day" — evidence if ever I heard it that things might not quite be for real.



Nigella Lawson

Party politics Oscar-style

A FUNNY thing happened in Los Angeles on Monday night: 5,500 film luminaries descended on the Shrine Auditorium to behold three hours of footage. Oscar presentations and awkward thank-you speeches. Then 800 waiters offered them caviar and lobster in a vast banquet hall decorated with Hawaiian Rothschild orchids at \$15 a

Stars clamour to be seen at the right awards bash, says Giles Whittell

flower. But instead of gorging, the Oscar people fled. By 10.15pm the sumptuous venue of the Governor's Ball was a place of also-rans and cleaner-uppers.

Why the sudden exodus?

Could it have been fear of being stuck in notorious South-Central LA, where the Oscars were handed out? Probably not. It was, more likely, a vivid illustration of the fact that stars hate being anywhere where everyone's invited.

The basic rule of Oscar night etiquette is to escape the compulsory Governor's Ball as fast as decently possible, put in "face time" at any studio party to which you may have a professional obligation, then lose your hangers-on and make for the parties that matter.

This year that rule spell chaos. In an horrendous bottleneck of frayed tempers and gridlocked limousines, more contenders than ever before converged on a cruelly

short list of acceptable post-post-Oscar parties.

There were really only two-and-a-half places to be seen. Clinging to pole position for the fourth year running, a Beverly Hills brasserie called Morton's provided the locale for *Vanity Fair* magazine's shamelessly smooty celebration of what it calls America's "bi-coastal power elite". From Mel Gibson to ex-presidential spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers, their names were flashed in lights onto the restaurant's walls as they alighted at the kerb.

IN SECOND place was the less exclusive but marginally trendier bash thrown by Miramax films at the Mondrian hotel on Sunset Boulevard for the casts and crews of *Sling Blade* and *The English Patient*.

That left only one studio party worth pointing your limo at: a Columbia/Tristar



Celebrating *Fargo* stars

extravaganza at the Eclipse, whose young chef, Serge Falesitch, had the daunting task of persuading Tom Cruise (*Jerry Maguire*) and Woody Harrelson (*The People vs Larry Flynt*) to linger rather than stray across the road to Morton's. Mr Falesitch spared no expense, flying in, among other things, two sushi chefs from Tokyo

and 400 specially harvested Florida crab claws at \$5 each. But Morton's was still the place.

This year the guest list included billionaires David Geffen and Barry Diller, the Australian Ambassador to Washington (accompanied by Shirley MacLaine), Karl Lagerfeld's muse, Lady Harlech, David Hockney, Valentino and all the Oscar nominees, every one of whom RSVP'd "yes".

For the likes of Tom Cruise and Ms Scott Thomas, when to slide out of your "own" party and make for Morton's is a question that redefines the term social conscience. Qualms are for wimps, and Cruise showed he has none. He prompted frantic rearrangement of the Eclipse event by inviting, at the last minute, 40 extra friends for dinner. Yet still Cruise deserted them after the briefest of look-ins and headed for the vastly more rarefied schmoozing on offer at Morton's.

The Oscar show always holds the seeds of anti-climax in what follows. Like sheep

caught in headlights, winners are bedegged by endless television crews for instant soundbites on their fame and future. Losers are subdued. Everyone else spends too much of the night in the world's most luxurious traffic jam. Even so, be sure that by the time you read this, a still-hungover Hollywood will have begun again the year-long struggle to get on the list that counts, next time.

MEDIA

How OK! won the battle for Michael Jackson Page 23

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Alan Coren



■ Suddenly, all manner of ravening creatures want me to throw them money

While I may not be able to speak with any authority about the effect of the election announcement on those who do business in great waters, I have to tell you that, in the little pond of Cricklewood, it seems to have generated a quite extraordinary feeding frenzy. Suddenly, all manner of ravening creatures have risen from the murky depths and begun breaking the surface with their snapping jaws. They want me to throw them money. They want me to throw it to them right this minute. If I do not run instantly to the bin in which the stuff is kept and start chucking it at them by the fistful, the creatures will not be able to answer for the consequences, come May 2.

For a start, my windows will fall out. I know this, because last Thursday night, even as I was raising the soup spoon to my lip, the phone rang. It was a creature called Colin. Colin wanted me to know that his highly trained operatives would be in my area the next day, desperate to fit my entire house with new windows before it was too late. When I inquired as to what too late meant, Colin explained that too late meant Tony Blair. Colin, he went on, was generously prepared to re-glaze my house before the inflation which would inevitably follow a Labour victory sent costs rocketing. When I replied that not even John Major had tried to lighten the life out of us with what, if the worst came to the worst, would happen to putty prices, Colin began telling me more about glazing economics than I wished to know, and I returned to my minestrone.

An hour later — I swear this, ask my wife — I was about to pour a second cup of coffee when the phone rang again and another creature urged me — not only for my own sake, but for that of my children and my children's children — to invest in the creature's personal equity plan immediately because it was a well-known fact that the first thing New Labour would do would be to abolish PEP tax-exemption.

To get rid of him before the coffee chilled, I told him I would think about it, which was a great mistake because, half an hour later (this is now 9.30, by the way), he rang back to ask not only whether I had finished thinking, but also to bang on about moving money offshore, in so conspiratorial a tone as to conjure up a snapshot of the pair of us, faces blacked and ears muffled against new Labour's shore batteries, rowing frantically away from Penzance, bound for Grand Cayman on the May 2 tide.

The phone did not ring again that night, but the letter box clattered. There was a leaflet on the mat; or rather, three leaflets, the deliverer clearly wishing to call it a day, despite the need for all hands to get to the pump before Tony Blair's did. The leaflets had been dispatched by a local firm of landscape gardeners who were pitching their sales into the self-same area of rough just outside new Labour's off-stump; ie, I could deceive Gordon Brown's hidden agenda for sending landscaping bills through the roof by the canny sleight of getting mine done right now.

Landscaping? In Cricklewood? A range of hills where the back fence once leaned, sheep grazing the water meadow in lieu of my nice shed, a river flowing where we used to have a place to keep the wheelie bins, probably with a hay wain in it? I don't want any of that, it would only attract artists and rambles and similar riff-raff, and I particularly don't want it for no better reason than to put one over on the incoming administration; any more than I want, as I have been invited to want in this morning's post, a new car at a price the dealer will be "unable to guarantee after May 1", for reasons unspecified, although gently hinted at by an ill-cropped photo of Tony Blair with an L-plate round his neck.

I've been thinking about all this, and the more I think, the less certain I am that it is just the last knockings of an enterprise culture eager to get its two pennorth in (or, rather, out) before the Göterdämmerung. Might not huckstering of a far more sophisticated order lie behind each cold-call and mailshot, its sole purpose being to make our flesh creep? I cannot yet say, but if I do spot a Reliant Robin out there with flanks that clatter "Seatchi Bros, No Job Too Large Or Small, Let Us Quote You", I'll be in touch.



A nation of Lottery Losers

Daniel Johnson says John Major will be remembered for making gamblers of us all. That will be his downfall

To those with their wits about them, it is evident that we are living through extraordinary times. This is one of the greatest political upheavals in our history. Tony Blair is about to win a victory which, by its sheer scale, will mark an epoch, just as 1945 or 1906 did. In retrospect, though, I suspect that historians will say that the British sleepwalked uncomprehendingly into a new era. We can all see why, after 18 years in office, the Tories might be facing defeat; but why are they facing catastrophe? We need an explanatory framework within which to grasp the inchoate but extreme revulsion which the British now feel towards this Government. To do that, one must answer the question: what makes the Major years memorable?

It seems so long ago that Essex Man bestrode the political landscape like a cheeky colossus, even if he was only the old phenomenon of the working-class Tory. Margaret Thatcher had unleashed a momentous transformation of economy and society, and John Major's victory in 1992, symbolised by the endorsement of the voters of Basilidon, marked the institutionalisation of Thatcherism. It was a permanent revolution. But it was not what she and her disciples had wanted: a remoralisation of society. Self-interest proved to be anything but enlightened.

Already by the early 1990s the sense of disappointed expectations was palpable. The trouble was not just that many people had been ruined in the recession. Too many people had tasted the forbidden fruit of speculation on property or shares, had extended their horizons beyond their means, had cultivated habits of consumption they could not sustain. Her Victorian values — virtue would bring its own reward, that self-denial and self-help were the only path to prosperity — no longer fitted the national mood. To placate Essex Man, John Major broke with one of the lady's Methodist taboos, that on gambling. He offered a modern version of Caesar's bread and circuses: the National Lottery. That was his greatest mistake.

It is for the lottery that John Major will be remembered. Had it lapsed, it would soon have been forgotten. But the lottery was a great success — on its own terms. And that meant a nation addicted to gambling, consumed by the tantalising prospect of instant gratification. Most people have fantasised about coming into a fortune. Some do it

incessantly. For them, the lottery was irresistible. It became the darling of the tabloids, for which it generated an endless supply of throwaway celebrities. Half the population eagerly threw itself into the new national pastime; the other half threw its hands up in mock horror, but was appeased by the promise of limitless largesse for the arts and charities. The lottery permeated British consciousness, reaching into every area of life with its new rituals, and promised a great party at the millennium, as a kind of collective lottery prize.

It was predictable that this audacious attempt to bribe the electorate with its own money would backfire. "It could be you", announced the advertisements — but it never was. One or two clever fellows with a grasp of mathematics, such as Professor Tim Congdon, warned us from the start that only a fool would waste his money on the lottery, that the odds were loaded against the punter — that it was, in short, a state-sponsored confidence trick — but they were ignored. Predictably, the British preferred to blame those in charge rather than themselves. Camelot and its regulator soon became extremely unpopular. The press pandered to public envy of lottery winners, whose morals were no worse than average. Always a tiny minority, they enjoy no respect because — lacking any merit but luck — they deserve none.

More ominously for the Government, there was outrage at the use of lottery proceeds for Covent Garden, the purchase of the Churchill papers and high culture generally. There was no enthusiasm even for the millennium festivities. As hard-earned cash was squandered on the lottery, and there was less for other entertainments or even necessities, the national mood turned ugly. Unsuccessful gamblers blame their own luck for only so long. After a while they blame the croopier. Then they blame the casino.

The British have become a nation of Lottery Losers, filled with resentment against those in authority or who are more fortunate. That mentality has spread through private and public life to an extent that is only now becoming apparent. We cannot kick the habit. But we despise ourselves and those who degraded us. The lottery has created more millionaires since its inception than industry. That has corrupted the work ethic, and with it the basis of Thatcherism. The change was prefigured by the ruin of countless middle-class families on the insurance market at Lloyd's, hitherto a kind of upper-class lottery. But the legitimisation of gambling by the lottery has allowed through the back door the politics of envy which Thatcherism tried to abolish.

Those who made a fast buck used to be admired by Essex Man. In recent years they have become the objects of envy, and in many cases are vilified. The fat cats of the privatised industries and well-to-do Tory MPs are the obvious cases. But the psychology of the Lottery Loser — for whom the link between effort and reward has been broken — influences our reaction to countless other *dramatis personae* in public life, and that in turn contributes to the cry: "Time for a change." Nick Leeson, for instance, is blamed less than his superiors at Barings, who did not go to prison. Greedy bankers or traders — unwilling to forgo their bonuses when the markets do not deliver, or flouncing out when their careers do not go to plan — prompt the Lottery Loser to dismiss the City as a gravy train or a scam.

The feeling that everybody else is making huge amounts of money without an honest day's work has been fed by the cult of celebrity in sport or showbiz. The Lottery Loser is less impressed by their achievements, and the hard work that goes into them, than by their bad behaviour. He resents their success and their ability to offend with impunity.

'It could be you', said the ads — but it never was

Again: the endless claims for "compensation" — whether for physical or psychological injury, bad investments, discrimination, defamation or mere inconvenience — are grist to the mill of the Lottery Loser. Likewise, the creatures of tabloid celebrity, from kiss-and-tell sneaks to the Mandy Althames. You can make a fortune out of misfortune, the Lottery Loser wryly concludes. None of it is fair — least of all the revenge he will wreak on the Government.

The authority of business, entertainment and the law may have suffered grievously. But the Lottery Loser's boundless cynicism and resentment is chiefly directed at politics and politicians — above all the Tories. And it is here that Tony Blair and new Labour stand to gain. Objectively, the parties have never been closer in ideology or policy. If the electorate prefers one to the other, one might expect that preference to be marginal, as it was in 1964 or 1974. Instead, a landslide is in prospect. Mr Major will be the victim of the lottery mentality he has fostered. The British are on the brink of their biggest political gamble in living memory.

Mr Blair's talk of morality and community has a subliminal appeal to the Lottery Loser. The addict yearns to be cured; the loser longs to regain his self-respect. New Labour appeals to those who despair of any pattern in success or failure, who see wealth as randomly distributed and want a premium on effort. But the gambler wants to be a winner even more than he dislikes being a loser. The unfairness of which the loser complains — no bonanza, not even a free lunch — is unlikely to change very much under Labour, any more than the lottery itself. The chippiness which is now leading the Lottery Loser to lash out at the Tories may quickly turn him against a Labour government which dashes his hopes of a jackpot.

The Citizen King of France, Louis-Philippe, had a prime minister, the great historian François Guizot, who replied to those who objected to his property franchise (which gave the vote only to the bourgeoisie): "Enrichissez-vous!" But the people would not wait to get richer. In 1848 they had a revolution and ejected their conservative premier along with his King. We are no less impatient. Essex Man used not to mind being told to get richer. But the Lottery Loser takes it as a personal insult. On May 1 the father of the lottery will himself become the biggest loser of all.

Ethelburga rises from the ashes

Richard Chartres

says the City church will now be restored

St Ethelburga's Church in the City of London survived the Great Fire and the Blitz, but it was blown to pieces by the Bishopsgate bomb on April 24, 1993. The church was one of many victims of violence which sprang from a sectarian and communal divide. This week, a group of Christian partners, stepping over confessional boundaries, have vowed to rebuild St Ethelburga's as a Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. Yesterday, Cardinal Hume, the Rev Janet Sowerbutts, a moderator in the United Reformed Church, and I stood among the ruins of the church, trying to picture how the new centre will relate to the very substantial fragments of St Ethelburga's that survive. The site is only a tenth of an acre and the restored facade will be dwarfed by the cliffs of the business houses in Bishopsgate. But the small and unthreatening can be a potent force in the work of reconciliation and peacemaking.

Ethelburga, herself, was the sister of the 20th Bishop of London, St Erconwald, who built the Bishop's Gate (from which the street takes its name) in 685. As an Abbess, Ethelburga was particularly venerated for her heroic conduct during one of the periodic bouts of plague in London.

The church is no stranger to religious strife. One of its rectors in the mid-16th century died a martyr's death at Tyburn for refusing to accept Henry VIII's supremacy. More auspiciously, this was the church in which Henry Hudson, the navigator, and his companions made their final communion on English soil in 1607 before setting out to discover the Northwest Passage.

The IRA bomb exploded only 15 yards from St Ethelburga's. The journalist Edward Henry was killed in the attack and 51 others were injured. Though earlier reports suggested that destruction was total, substantial elements of the medieval church were left standing. The north, south and east walls largely survived the blast. The explosion did not cause a fire, so stone mouldings, timber and fittings survived in fragments of varying sizes. The latest archaeological reports reveal that the timber framework of the medieval bellry tower which looked on to Bishopsgate, could be reconstructed.

After the bombing, sorting of the remains was carried out with the assistance of the Corporation of London, English Heritage, and the archaeological services of the Museum of London. Much of the material was removed to another City church, All Hallows, London Wall.

Discussions have been going on ever since to decide what the future for St Ethelburga's should be. The *Times* and its readers, in particular, have insisted that the continuities of St Ethelburga's be respected. I believe that the proposal for the Centre for Reconciliation and Peace — which will incorporate the surviving fabric, so far as possible, and most importantly rebuild the facade on Bishopsgate — does reflect the continuities as well as offering a new future for St Ethelburga's.

The general concept is that there should be enhanced public access to the church, which would continue to be a place for prayer, worship and quiet reflection. At the same time, the intention is to create a facility providing both a meeting place and office accommodation to create a centre dedicated to work in the field of reconstruction and peace with an emphasis on the spiritual dimension of peacemaking.

The plan is to operate an advocacy and mediation service, as well as offering practical support and counselling for victims of terrorism, conflict and torture. With the City of London established as a world leader in consultancies of various kinds, St Ethelburga's is appropriately placed to develop a new style of consultancy in mediation. Discussions are already well advanced with the former hostages, John McCarthy and Terry Waite, and with other advisers about the development of the centre's programme. As well as the rebuilt St Ethelburga's, incorporating a small sanctuary, there will be a memorial garden, dedicated to the victims of violence and to the peacemakers. There may be a permanent exhibition on the theme of reconciliation, featuring the lives of those who have suffered from terrorism but are examples of the power of reconciliation.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the rebuilding programme is undertaken in the manner that respects the historical significance of the church, while providing it with an imaginative and purposeful future: "a place of hopeful pilgrimage". During the gestation period, the concept has been enriched by many positive suggestions from a cross-section of London citizens.

Once more detailed plans are available, it may be necessary to launch an appeal later in the year. A previous scheme for the site was costed at £3 million and obviously it would not be responsible to ask for contributions before a more detailed financial picture was available. Early indications, however, of very substantial interest in the proposal encourage me to think that the vision will be realised.

It was very good indeed to meet fellow Christians in Holy Week to make together a small contribution to building that peace of God which is so much more than a mere absence of war and violence. St Ethelburga's destroyed is an example of what can happen if we do nothing. St Ethelburga's restored will be a sign of hope.

The author is the Bishop of London.

Betty to bat

THERE will be no space for bad manners or designer stubble among cricketers visiting the Oval this year. Surrey County Cricket Club next month becomes the first county to have a woman as its president, and she is not the sort to put up with loutish behaviour. At the club's annual general meeting on April 14, the current president, John Paul Getty, will hand over the reins to Betty Surridge, the Betty Boothroyd of the cricket square.



Betty Surridge: game girl

The widow of the former Surrey captain and cricket bat-maker Stuart Surridge, Betty is described by friends as a "game girl who likes a glass of wine and will live up to the buffers of Surrey no end". Henry Blofeld, the radio commentator, described her appointment as tremendous news. "A wonderful lady, although I've no idea about her batting average."

Betty says she does not play cricket, although she spoke highly of the club's most prominent supporter, "I know John and Norma Major very well," she said yesterday. "He loves his cricket and actually supported Surrey when my husband was captain. Stuart met him several times."

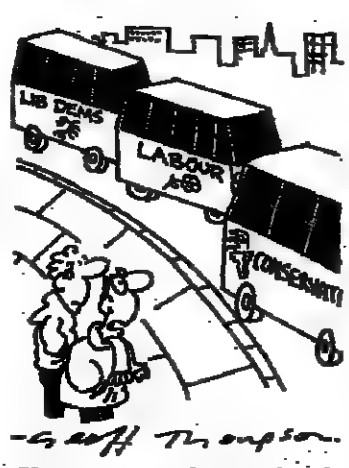
One of her first outings will be to a six-a-side tournament involving female cricketers and the Lady Taverners charity. Should John Major no longer be Prime Minister, he could find himself handing out the prizes.

Those Redgraves certainly know how to deflate the glamour of Hollywood's Oscars night. A few years back Vanessa threw a communist tantrum. This year it was the turn of Lynn, who co-starred in *Shine* and who celebrated the

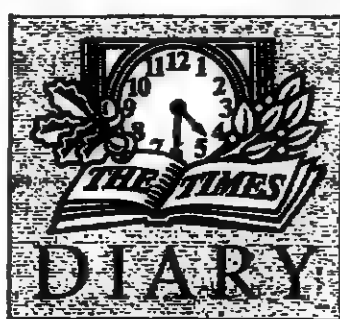
flash-bulb-popping atmosphere in Los Angeles by talking about... her bunions. "I just had a bunionectionomy," she said, looking down at her toes. "Come from all those pointy shoes we wore in the States."

Men only

LORD PORCHESTER, son of the Earl of Carnarvon, has been out soliciting for men. In his role as tub-thumper in chief for the National Playing Fields Association, "Porchie" is on the prowl for bachelors to auction themselves at his



"You wait ages for one battle bus, then three turn up"



"Bid for Bachelors" evening later this year. So far, the line-up looks familiar: the confirmed bachelor Christopher Biggins, the wife-collecting Marquess of Bath and that old shut Peter Stringfellow. As Porchester points out to prospective bachelors "you don't even need to be a 'bachelor' in the strict sense of the term."

Right pair

FIRST in line for French designer Jean Paul Gaultier's venture into haute couture are Joan Collins and her daughter, Tara Newley. At dinner in Daphne's in Chelsea on Friday night it was decided that they would both wear JPC frocks when Miss Newley marries in Paris this June. They insist that their decision bears no comparison with the Duchess of York's rather sinister habit of dressing up

her daughters in mini versions of her own outfits.

Joan Collins, more commonly associated with big hair and shoulder pads than Gaultier's trademark conical bras, will wear a brightly coloured, extremely tight-fitting, off-the-shoulder number. Miss Newley may fade away beside her, in a rather more demure oyster-coloured frock with scalloped shoulders and long gloves.

Original sin

LABOUR'S education spokesman, David Blunkett, let slip the origin of Tony Blair's soundbite about "education, education, education".

"We got the education slogan from a poll that North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council engaged in last year," Blunkett told the Association of Teachers and Lecturers. "They found that 43 per cent thought sex was the most enjoyable thing. The remaining 57 per cent put education."

Manor born

THERE is consolation for Mike Leigh, the inglorious film director thwarted in all five of his Oscar nominations for *Secrets and Lies*. Earlier this week, I reported that stiffies had been dispatched by Brockett Hall, inviting all the ba-



Leigh: born in a ballroom

ties who were born there during the war, when it housed an evacuated East End maternity home, to a tea party on April 12. Leigh's mother read the piece and contacted Brockett Hall to secure an invitation for her son, who was born in the ballroom there in 1943.

Speaking from her home in Salford, Phyllis Leigh, a former midwife, remembers her son as being a "healthy, rumbustious baby". She recalls: "He last visited when his then wife, Alison Steadman, was playing Mrs Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, which filmed there last year. I think he'll want to go back to see all those old faces."

P.H.S



CHEER UP, MR BROWN

Tory reforms have made Britain safe for faster growth

If there is one issue on which the Tories and Labour ought to agree on it is the good performance of the British economy. Of course, things could always be better: economic growth could be a little higher, unemployment could be still lower, the quality of available jobs could be better and inflation could be somewhat below the Government's 2.5 per cent target instead of a smidgeon above. On balance, however, the British economy has enjoyed a strong and well balanced recovery since John Major abandoned the foolish economic policy which all the main political parties fervently supported in the last election — the commitment to keep sterling in the ERM.

Surprisingly, it could be in the interests of the Labour Party, as well as the Tories, to emphasise this economic success. For the Conservatives, the need to gain credit for good economic performance is obvious. Less obviously, but more importantly, it is also in Labour's interests to talk the economy up, instead of down.

There are three reasons for this, none of them understood by the ever-lugubrious Gordon Brown. First, there are the worries of voters who have turned against the Tories for non-economic reasons but will become increasingly anxious about their personal prosperity under Labour once the election campaign intensifies. The more confident these people feel about the durability of the economic recovery, the less nervous they may become about giving Labour a chance.

Secondly, Mr Brown should realise that his party's ability to achieve its ambitions in office will depend entirely on the strength of the economy. If Mr Brown really believes that the economic recovery "could be short-lived" and "is not built on solid foundations", as he said again yesterday, then Labour cannot be believed in any of its promises to improve health and education without raising the burden of tax.

This leads to the third and most important reason why Mr Brown must be made to understand that the present economic expansion really is fundamentally sound. If Mr Brown ever becomes Chancellor he will

have a critical responsibility for maintaining the pace of the recovery by managing economic demand. As our Economics Editor explains on page 31, it is now widely accepted by economists of most theoretical persuasions — including the pragmatic former monetarists running the US Federal Reserve Board and the International Monetary Fund — that governments and central banks must take responsibility for the proper management of economic demand.

Ironically, the main reason for the resurgence of confidence in managing demand to maintain full employment has been the trade-union reform, labour-market deregulation and privatisation of the Thatcher and Reagan periods. These have made economies more efficient and far less prone to inflation. In a sense, the right-wing reforms have made the world safe again for a cautious version of the traditionally left-wing policies of full employment, albeit with a crucial difference. The emphasis today is on the use of interest rates to manage demand. Few would advocate the old-fashioned Keynesian remedy of swelling government borrowing to create jobs.

Unfortunately, Mr Brown does not seem to understand any of this. On the contrary, he argues that the 18 years of Tory policy have undermined Britain's ability to sustain non-inflationary growth. He promises to increase Britain's long-term growth rate by improving training or encouraging investment; but these measures, even if they proved successful, would have no perceptible effects on Britain's productive capacity for many years to come. Until then Mr Brown, if he were sincere in his pessimism about Britain's incapacity to grow without creating inflation, he would have to take steps to depress demand by raising taxes or interest rates. Far from creating jobs, the Treasury and Bank of England acting on Mr Brown's gloomy precepts, would be duty bound to try to prevent unemployment from falling or even to push it up. If only the Tories could convey this message to the public, they might yet turn macroeconomic management into a potent electoral issue.

CZARS AND THEIR EMPIRES

American experience cautions against an anti-drugs supremo

There are many important social issues that receive too little emphasis in elections dominated by economics. Tony Blair's evident interest in attacking drug abuse is an honourable exception. The solution that Mr Blair outlined yesterday — the appointment of an anti-drugs supremo or "czar" — to lead the "war on drugs" may not, though, prove the best instrument for his intentions.

Not for the first time Mr Blair has looked to the United States for both ideas and language. His model, in its formal title, is the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, which was established there in 1989 as a post of Cabinet-level ranking. The Labour leader claimed that this figure had become a "substantial success" that would be a "valuable added weapon" were it copied in this country.

There are relatively few in Washington who would offer such a blanket endorsement. At best, their czar has enjoyed a mixed record and at worst, many would contend, has been a damaging distraction. The number of Americans regularly using drugs, which had halved in the preceding decade, has risen since its introduction. Those undertaking government treatment programmes fell despite a more than 300 per cent increase in expenditure. That shift, especially among the young, became an electoral embarrassment to President Clinton. He felt obliged last year to select a four-star General as his latest supremo.

The reasons for this relative failure are more than relevant to Britain. In the United States successive Presidents thought that a new office, an impressive title, and some additional resources would in themselves constitute a strategy. The existence of a czar became a delegation of responsibility. For

Labour ministers, already burdened with an ambitious agenda, there would evolve, almost inevitably, a similar temptation.

In Washington, like Whitehall, the administration of drugs policy has long been split between several departments. In theory, the czar, as chief co-ordinator, was created specifically to rectify this division. In bureaucratic practice, it has become one more agency and without the institutional power of its competitors. That danger would be even more acute here as Mr Blair would like an appointed expert, not in the Cabinet but of similar status, to take charge over elected politicians.

Labour would be well advised to note that a czar is not a strategy. Mr Blair is certainly right to argue that the fragmentation of control between the Home Office and the Departments of Health and Education does not advance the overall operation. That fracture reflects a political reluctance to decide conclusively whether drug abuse is mostly a law and order question with a public health source or mainly a public health matter with a law and order outcome. A choice between the two approaches would eliminate much of the superficial need for a commander.

It would also help to acknowledge the limits of central action. This problem endures because of the demand for drugs — which ensures supply — not because of the detailed organisation of departments. The causes of this craving are best addressed through a diverse range of well-financed specific initiatives. It is extremely improbable that there exists a single State-directed solution. Mr Blair's best hope may well rest not on a national czar but an extensive network of local commissioners.

THEY THE JURY

Conscientious objection should not be an excuse

There are few duties that accompany British citizenship. We all have to pay tax, of course, and attend school until we are 16, but other than that, little is required of us by law. Even voting, though seen by many as a civic duty that has to be exercised, is not compulsory. With the passing of conscription and National Service, jury service remains one of the few acts of citizenship that society calls upon individuals to undertake.

It is a serious business. To pass judgment on their peers may be, for many jurors, the most power that they ever exercise over another person's life. For that reason, the decision of Judge Azura Cooray to send two women jurors to prison on Monday for refusing even to consider a verdict was at first sight draconian. But for the same reason, it was entirely understandable.

Bonnie Schot and Carol Barclay, who were released yesterday on appeal, were genuinely shocked by the judge's treatment. So will be many who have read about their plight. But their "crime" was more than expressing confusion about the case. Having sat through 17 days of evidence and four hours of summing up in a case with five defendants, they announced in a note to the judge that they would not even take part in discussions with other jurors about the

verdict. Miss Barclay said that she could not return a verdict on anyone at any time. Miss Schot, the jury foreman, said that she could not make up her mind.

The solution for Miss Schot is clear: if she could not decide, then she should have returned a "not guilty" verdict on the ground that the case had not been proved beyond reasonable doubt. It is not open to Miss Barclay, however, to object on principle to passing judgment on defendants. When jurors are sworn in, they promise to reach a verdict on the evidence. The result of her refusal to do so is that the trial had to be adjourned and a new one ordered at an estimated additional cost to the taxpayer of £150,000.

Jury service should not be treated lightly. These women's actions suggest a cavalier approach to the administration of justice. They could have asked for clarification if they were confused, or they could have opted for a "not guilty" verdict if they were not persuaded. But to refuse to reach any verdict is to cock a snook at the very essence of the criminal justice system. Their appeal judges may rightly decide that one night in prison is enough to apprise them, and others, of the seriousness of their actions. But, however harsh the sentence may have seemed, it had to be passed.

Sleaze allegations and moral aspects of electioneering

From the Chairman of the Virgin Group of Companies

Sir, Two weeks ago I returned from Greece. In a question and answer session there I was asked to cite the main differences I found in doing business in England compared to Greece. I argued that you could trust British politicians, the judiciary, the police, the customs, planning officers, etc. never to accept cash for services whereas in some European countries this seemed not to be the case. I pointed out the obvious — if those at the top play this game why shouldn't the rest of society join in?

When I returned home — to my embarrassment — it seemed that some British politicians may have behaved not a lot better.

Even at this late stage surely the constituencies in question should change their candidates for the next election — there are many young, keen and forthright people who would like to go into politics and serve their country.

Kind regards,
RICHARD BRANSON,
Chairman,
Virgin Group of Companies,
11 Holland Park, W11,
March 24.

From Mr Andrew Chadwick

Sir, We would seem to be about to get a new definition of Buggins's turn: "When a political party is so long in the wilderness that the electorate, having forgotten all their comparative qualities, votes them into power in defiance of both common sense and any certainty that they will do any better than the incumbents."

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW CHADWICK,
Principal,
Chadwick International,
1a Birkenhead Street, WCL,
March 20.

From the Reverend Edward Thompson

Sir, Parents are sometimes aware that their offspring are their true riches. Likewise, "the true riches of a nation are vigorous and happy men and women, willingly and intelligently co-operating for the good of the community."

One could wish that as politicians approach the forthcoming election they would take note of the economic, social and educational implications of this helpful statement, which comes from a report presented to the Houses of Convocation of Canterbury in April 1997.

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD THOMPSON,
3 Woodseye, Sydenham Hill, SE26,
March 22.

From Mr Dennis Barnard

Sir, It would seem likely that we shall see a change of government after May 1. May we ask, or expect, that the incoming administration will, quite soon after taking office, announce the date from which it will be prepared to accept responsibility, as the government in office, for any failure of its policies. May we also ask, or expect, that the outgoing administration will concede a future date from which any success of the incoming administration, will cease to be the result of their policies while in government.

Should these dates coincide?
Yours faithfully,
D. F. BARNARD,
Del Rivo, Burtons Lane,
Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire,
March 20.

From Mr David Watt

Sir, In opposition the new Labour Party has clearly demonstrated the skill with which it has refined its techniques of procuring and purveying

leaked information (report, March 20). It has raised the practice — or lowered it, depending on one's point of view — to an art form.

If Labour should form the next administration I doubt whether the Tories in opposition will have either the aptitude or appetite to match this performance.

In the interests of open government, to which Labour so evidently attaches importance, and the free flow of information to both the media and the public, I hope that Mr Blair puts the person responsible into the Cabinet, where he can continue his distinguished work and be answerable to the Commons, and take questions in the usual way.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID WATT,
40 Brookfield,
5 Highgate West Hill, N6.

From Mr Steven Resznetiak

Sir, Flooding voters are spoilt for choice in north London. A few streets away from my home, a revolving billboard carries election posters placed by both the Labour Party and the Conservatives, together with a car advertisement. The message changes every ten seconds or so.

Yours faithfully,
STEVEN RESZNETIAK,
12 Shropshire Road, N22,
March 24.

From Mr R. J. Abbott

Sir, If the outcome of the election depends on 80 marginal seats (report and map, March 18), why not have election broadcasts solely in those areas and leave the rest of us in peace?

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD ABBOTT,
20 Oak Road,
Hale, Altrincham, Cheshire,
March 20.

Gays in the Army

From the Minister of State for the Armed Forces

Sir, Your headline today, "Army rule change to end ban on gays", gives a wholly incorrect impression. The Army has been reviewing its guidelines on conduct and discipline, but the review has not included any further consideration of the Government's policy on homosexuality.

In common with other Services, the Army believes that homosexuality, whether male or female, is not compatible with the needs of military life because of the close physical conditions in which soldiers have to live and work.

Service personnel can be required to live and work in close proximity with each other, often under great stress and for long periods. We believe that these conditions, together with the need for absolute trust and confidence between all ranks, necessitate the exclusion of those of homosexual orientation or behaviour.

This is not a moral judgment — it is because we cannot risk undermining the combat effectiveness of our troops and their ability to meet the defence needs of the country.

This policy has been reviewed and supported by Parliament, most recently when considering the Armed Forces Bill last year. The Armed Forces Bill select committee looked at this subject in detail, took evidence from a large number of witnesses reflecting a wide range of opinion, and concluded that there should be no change to the current policy. We have no plans to change it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
NICHOLAS SOAMES,
Ministry of Defence,
Main Building, Whitehall, SW1,
March 24.

Gorbachev's legacy

From Professor Archie Brown, FBA

Sir, The cliché "Gorbysmania" often becomes a substitute for reasoned argument. Brian Crozier (letter, March 22) fails to acknowledge that while Gorbachev retained a misplaced esteem for Lenin, he gradually came to reject the fundamental tenets of Leninism. Gorbachev's 1987 book, *Perestroika*, which Crozier cites, broke some new ground, but it was from 1988 that Gorbachev realised that the Soviet system needed to be fundamentally transformed, rather than merely reformed.

Oleg Gordievsky (letters, March 12, 22) apparently fails to realise that the Soviet Union had ceased to be a communist system in any meaningful sense by the end of the 1980s. It is not because Gorbachev was a "communist autocrat" that he is greatly respected by many people in the West — including the leading politicians who had dealings with him — but because he dismantled the communist system. Gordievsky carries his vendetta against Gorbachev to absurd lengths when he suggests the "forged the mini-set" which produced in post-Soviet Russia "the infamous blood-bath in Chechnia". The war in Afghanistan began under Brezhnev and was ended by Gorbachev. The war in Chechnia began under Yeltsin and was ended by Alexander Lebed.

Yours faithfully,
ARCHIE BROWN,
(Sub-Warden),
St Antony's College, Oxford,
March 23.

Retirement of Baroness Chalker

From Mr M. J. C. Tweedie

Sir, Your report (March 21) that Baroness Chalker has decided to retire as Minister for Overseas Development after the election includes compliments of the highest order by the Prime Minister.

In these times when political sleaze attracts so much media attention, here is a politician of undoubted integrity whom we all can admire. I hope there will be more like her amongst the new intake of Members of Parliament after the election.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES TWEEDIE,
Lower Upton, Little Hereford,
Ludlow, Shropshire,
March 21.

From Mr David Adair

Sir, When Linda Chalker was rejected by her electorate in 1992, the Prime Minister responded by arranging her elevation to the peerage so that she could return to her previous ministerial post.

Evidently, it has been a very satisfactory arrangement; how many other middle-echelon ministers have remained in the same office for the full five years of this Parliament? For Lady Chalker it has provided a well-remunerated anti-chamber to full retirement from political life; for the Prime Minister it has guaranteed good behaviour in a potentially troublesome backwater of his administration.

This is a fine example of the proper working of prime-ministerial patronage, part of the code of parliamentary behaviour on which we pride our

country and which is now said to have been violated so shockingly by some errant Tory backbenchers.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID ADAIR,
19 Swanston Field,
Whitchurch on Thames,
Reading, Berkshire,
March 21.

From Mr Barry Lennox

Sir, Zimbabwe public service pensioners in this country will not be sorry to see the departure of Baroness Chalker as Minister for Overseas Development. She has constantly opposed any efforts to help them following the virtual disappearance of their pensions as a result of the plummeting Zimbabwe dollar, now worth less than a tenth of its value at independence.

This is in spite of an assurance given in 1979 by an earlier Minister of State at the Foreign Office that the Zimbabwe Independence Constitution contained "full safeguards" for public service pensioners.

Her attitude is in stark contrast to the help her Government has given Maxwell pensioners and those allegedly mis-sold personal pensions, especially as in neither of those cases was it directly involved in arrangements. Her Majesty's Government was a signatory to the Zimbabwe Constitution.

Yours faithfully,
B. J. LENNOX,
(President, Rhodesia Public Services Association, 1977-80),
11 Boyne Rise,
King's Worthy, Winchester,
March 21.

Tunes sinister

From Dr Andrew Cockburn

Sir, Your leading article, "Putting left to rights", and report about a piano for the left-handed (March 10) has prompted Mr Gareth Glyn's suggestion (letter, March 14) that a violin for the right-handed should be a greater priority.

In fact, left-handed pianists are quite well catered for: the repertoire of left-hand works may be small but it is distinctive. Ravel's concerto for left hand is well known, while Faure's ardentecity is amply demonstrated in his compositions.

The virtuoso pianist, Leopold Godowsky, held that the left hand, far from being relegated to "dull, repetitive work", is in many ways superior to the right. Freer of tension, it is more

supple and relaxed. Commanding the middle and lower registers, it can produce a more sonorous and less percussive tone — with the damper pedal freeing it to play in the upper registers.

Godowsky greatly increased the range of the left-hand repertoire with, for example, a paraphrase of Strauss's *Gypsy Baron* waltz, and 22 studies based on Chopin's *Etudes*. Those interested in a "Chopin revolution", as your leader put it, might care to try his study based on Chopin's Op 10, No 12 — the *Revolutionary Study* — for the left hand alone.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW COCKBURN,
(Co-founder, London Piano Circle),
30 Southway,
Hamstead Garden Suburb, NW11,
March 14.

Trouble in Oporto

From Mr Richard Kurt

Sir, Rob Hughes's report (March 21: see also report, March 20, later editions) on Manchester United fans' trouble in Oporto quotes a member of the British Embassy staff in Lisbon as saying there would be 10,000 visiting fans, of whom only 6,400 had tickets, thus in my view providing support to the Portuguese police's contention that ticketless fans and forgeries were at the root of the violence.

The embassy official quoted was mistaken, as the figures only relate to tickets supplied via Manchester United's box office. Independent travel firms also supplied ticket/travel packages, with bona fide tickets provided by FC Porto. I was in Portugal

for four days and only met one person who did not have such a ticket in his possession. This mistake was compounded by what I regard as unjust criticism of "so-called supporters" without legitimate tickets" later in the report.

The pre-match crush, which your reporter admits he did not see, had nothing to do with ticketless fans or forgeries. I should know, for I was in the midst of it. The only issues there were crowd "control" and police brutality. I hope the report promised by Oporto's police chief next week will be rigorously analysed.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD KURT,
c/o Macmillan Publishing,
7 Albany Street, Edinburgh,
March 21.

Museum policy on 'looted' treasures

From Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn, FBA, Master of Jesus College, Cambridge

Sir, Mr Christopher Cavey (letter, March 19) is astounded that I, as a trustee of the British Museum, should be critical of those collectors who, by their unquestioning purchase of unprovenanced antiquities, effectively finance "the cycle of destruction of archaeological sites" (report, March 13).

The terrible looting which continues in Cambodia, Afghanistan and Mali as well as in such traditional fields for illicit excavation as Greece and Cyprus, Italy, Turkey and Mexico, persuaded many of the great museums of the world several years ago that more stringent acquisition policies were appropriate and that they should seek to follow the Unesco Convention of 1970.

Innocent collectors should know that the British Museum, in common with a growing number of museums nationally or internationally, will no longer purchase unprovenanced antiquities (unless accompanied by secure documentation of ownership prior to 1970). Unprovenanced antiquities are no longer acceptable even as gifts or bequests.

The priority today is to end the continuing destruction of the world's historic heritage, and responsible collectors as well as the world's great museums have a responsibility which they should recognise.

Yours sincerely,
COLIN RENFREW,
The Master's Lodge,
Jesus College, Cambridge,
March 21.

Church advertising

From the Chairman of the Church of England Communications Committee

Sir, The Church of England is often at its most imaginative and effective when it operates on a local level. That is what the Birmingham and Lichfield dioceses will be doing through their Christian commercial on Central Television in the run-up to Easter (report, March 21).

The problem arises when, mistakenly or wilfully, such initiatives are perceived by others to have the full backing of the Church of England and to be part of a presumed overarching policy.

No such policy exists: nor should it. Each diocesan bishop is responsible under God, and within the minimal constraints of the unique Anglican framework, for what happens in his diocese.

However, it would clearly benefit the Church if the people involved in this important and creative field of Christian advertising were to have even closer links with each other; and with those who, sometimes unexpectedly, have to comment on what they have produced.

This might have the further benefit of providing a forum for deeper examination of the content and purpose of such advertising.

The Birmingham and Lichfield offering comes across as prayerful and thoughtful. By contrast, attempts from other dioceses have sometimes seemed to reduce the great mystery of the incarnate God to utter banality.

Yours sincerely,
NIGEL WAKEFIELD,
Bishop's Lodge,
Woodthorpe Lane,
Wakefield, West Yorkshire,
March 22.

Egg on face

From the Archdeacon of Swindon

Sir, On this Palm Sunday the children in Junior Church were asked why next Sunday was the most important in the Church's year. Without hesitation came the answer: "Channel 5 stars." Good news perhaps for some but sadly we still await conversion.

Yours faithfully,
M. J. MIDDLETON,
2 Louvers Way,
Swindon, Wiltshire,
March 24.

More egg on face

From the Registrar of Cullford School

Sir, Richard Lloyd writes (letter, March 24) of his concern about the transport of players from Suffolk to Rosslyn Park as we, at Cullford, have cause for concern about the transmission of information from the schools' seven-a-side tournament. Your correspondent was told that some members of the Cullford team were lost in "Hampstead". Alas, this appeared in his report as Hampshire.

However, confusion about London landmarks is not uncommon among school pupils. This was certainly evident in the observation of the girl, far from here, who maintained that Salome was a wicked woman who took off all her clothes in front of Harrods.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HUMPHRIES,
Registrar,
Cullford School,
Cullford, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk,
March 24.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

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Yesterday's taboo, 2020's entertainment

Predictions for the next millennium, not in short supply, have one glaring omission. What is the future of pornography? In 2020 AD what images will remain taboo, now that virtually all is on show?

The desperation to identify some new source of forbidden titillation is shown by the outcry over the certification of the film *Crash* by the British Board of Film Classification for viewing by those 18 or over. The Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, has reminded local authorities of their power to ban it if they choose.

All sides seem to agree that *Crash* links sexual arousal with car accidents. The movie passed the BBFC's muster because, in expert opinion, it was not sado-masochistic. No one was seen to take pleasure from the suffering. The board's director, James Ferman, told *Today* on Radio 4: "If the film had included characters that were getting off on hurting other people, that would have made it impossible."

"Getting off on it?" Now I'm shocked. Since when has this earthy expression been acceptable Radio 4 speech? Taboos are falling so fast that you can't be sure what is beyond the pale.

The *Daily Mail* is fiercely campaigning against *Crash* and the BBFC, calling the film depraved and an affront to common decency. In the same spirit, the Westminster City Council has banned the film, unless cut, for showing in the West End. In a letter to *The Times*, a Westminster councillor explained the concern for its possible "effect on those — no doubt a minority — who could be influenced by the values of the film."

Little except the medium (then print, now screen) seems to have changed from the kind of protective censorship exerted in 1909 by the Circulating Libraries' Association, then representing, among others, W H Smith, Boots and The Times Book Club. Sharing the widespread worry about the rise in literacy, these bookkeepers, according to *The Times* of November 2, 1909, undertook that: "In future, we will not place in circulation any book which, by reason of the personal, scandalous, libellous, immoral, or otherwise disagreeable nature of its contents, is in our opinion likely to prove offensive to any considerable section of our subscribers."

A reader's letter to *The Times* congratulated the association on behalf of "the British public that cares for the sanctities of home life, for a manhood with high ideals, and a pure womanhood" for "safeguarding readers from the contamination of the nasty novel".

Today our sanctities are guarded by the numerous media watchdogs on standards in advertising and in broadcasting. Yet did

you catch *Cracker* on ITV on March 14? Young blonde serial killer harnesses near-naked man to a bed. The handcuffs go on, first one, then the other. Then his feet are shackled. As the fun turns to panic he screams "Please!" to no avail. For her next victim, in the graded intensification of humiliation traditional in pornography, the murderer, after tying him up, tapes his mouth, rubs him with Vaseline, then applies her electrodes to his extremities. If you think she didn't then switch the current, you didn't see the programme.

When this kind of sado-masochism is acceptable as free Saturday night entertainment for an audience of 1.9 million (actual viewing figures), what is the point of worrying about the impact a pretentious arty film that will be seen by merely thousands, not millions, of people over 18, they having gone out into the cold and paid a fair sum to exercise their choice?

Public taste on sex is liberalising very fast. Images once shocking (the bare breast, the condom, male nudity, the transvestite) are now acceptable on national TV and in advertisements. So what in 20 years' time will we be laughing at for having been banned in the fusty 1990s? The erect penis, for certain, ejaculation, and sexual penetration: the three elements now taboo and whose presence distinguishes hard from soft pornography, absolutely forbidden.

The heavens will fall! I doubt it. Who 20 years ago would have thought that shots of sexual intercourse would be routine on television? Or that no film would be complete without an on-screen visit to the lavatory? More likely, we will shudder at the prudishness of the past, which made taboo the portrayal of the activities of the healthy body, yet savoured moving pictures of the human frame in a shattered state.

The profane images of 2020 AD will probably be the cigarette, the burger and the happy housewife with her elbows buried in suds. Along with these, with any luck, will be the seductive child and the emaciated female.

Amid such shifting standards, the protection of children must remain absolute. From the Internet and videos as well as from television. Far more alarming last week than the certification of *Crash* was the news that the 9pm watershed isn't working. Children of five and six are watching television late at night, often alone.

The answer is to keep TV out of their bedrooms and to keep someone in the house who cares what they are watching. But to try to ban a film restricted to adults, seen around the world without cuts or controversy, is worse than patronising. It is censorship.



BRENDA MADDOX

Guerin role for Jodie?

THE actress Jodie Foster is being tipped to play Veronica Guerin, the murdered Irish journalist, in a Hollywood film based on her life. Sources say that Carol Doyle, the Irish film writer, is well advanced with a script for the project which is being masterminded by Jerry Bruckheimer, whose credits include *Tupac* and *The Rock*.

The film is based in part on *The Martyrdom of Veronica Guerin*, an article written by the investigative reporter Mike Sager in the March edition of *American GQ*.

Sager, meanwhile, has hit upon a relatively untapped seam of journalistic inspiration. He is about to sign a six-figure deal with Bruckheimer, which would give the producer the first film rights on any story he is working on. The arrangement would also allow the studio to suggest stories for Sager to report on.

It is not the first time that Sager has struck gold. Last year he landed \$750,000 from TriStar Pictures and Bruckheimer for the rights to a *GQ*



Jodie Foster, left, may enact the life of Veronica Guerin

story he had written about Janet Cooke, a former *Washington Post* reporter who won a Pulitzer Prize for a story that turned out to be bogus.

Sager insists only that his latest deal with Bruckheimer would not affect his journalistic integrity or the types of stories he goes after. "It just means that 18 years of journalistic work is beginning to pay off retroactively," he says.

Title hopes

A REFRESHING new twist to rumours that the EMAP-owned mag *Media Week*

Pressing decision

THE barons of the regional press joined John Major for lunch on the day he called the general election. All the leading proprietors were present except one. But Philip Graf, chief executive of Trinity Holdings (the largest regional newspaper publisher in Britain which boasts 120 titles) insists that nothing political should be read into his absence. He sent a colleague in his place, saying that as it was the day before the board discussed the group's annual results, he had had to make a difficult decision about the best use of his time. Quite.

● An article in last week's *Sunday Times* in which it was alleged that Cherie Booth had become anorexic after her husband became leader of the opposition in 1994 has infuriated Labour who say the allegations are totally untrue and they are seeking a retraction. The *Sunday Times* says it has yet to receive a complaint. Curiously, the suggestion that Ms Booth became anorexic is new, but the quote from an unnamed friend — "It's a bit like Princess Diana. She's been thrown into the public arena and she's nervous" — was old, having appeared in an anonymous profile of the Labour leader's wife in *The*

Sunday Times in 1994. That the piece should have been written by Sarah Baxter is also intriguing. At the *New Statesman*, she was a trail-blazer for *New Labour* and until now has been a pin-up of the young bucks who staff Labour's rapid rebuttal unit in Millbank. It is feared that the dog-eared photographs of her will now be removed and her name spoken in only the most hushed tones.

Not so fast

THE *ASIAN AGE* newspaper, published in London and Delhi, made a fatal mistake last week. Seeing a wire story about "tributes pouring in to Dame Vera Lynn", a sub at the paper hastily bashed out the headline "World War II's Top Sweetheart Vera Lynn Dies", stuck it on top of the copy and pushed it through. The sad news appeared in the paper.

Closer examination revealed, however, that the tributes — from Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and John Major — were prompted by an 80th birthday bash thrown for Dame Vera at the Imperial War Museum.

"It takes me back to the war," she says. "The Japanese used to put out reports that I had been killed in an air raid in the hope that it would lower the troops' morale."

Cashing in on the action

AN INCREASING number of big-budget ads, which almost amount to mini-movies, are tapping into the current taste for Hollywood action movies such as *Star Wars* and *Dante's Peak*.

The latest blockbuster commercial is the new Lowe Howard-Spink film for Smirnoff, out next week. This off-second, adrenalin-pumping film shifts through seven sets and horrors heavily from *Mission Impossible*.

It features a villain and his henchmen in pursuit of a couple and involves runaway trains, rough seas and alien spacecraft. It took six months to film, cost an estimated £1 million to make (roughly five times the cost of an average commercial) and even takes its name — *Smarienberg* — from a combination of the Sixties chase film *Last Year in Marienberg* and the director Stephen Spielberg.

"The trend is emerging as brands

ADVERTISING

become bigger and more global and are prepared to spend a lot more money than before on big global campaigns," says one observer.

UNLIKEABLE advertising does work, according to Jasper Shelbourne, executive creative director of J Walter Thompson, the UK's second biggest agency.

Speaking at the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising "It Pays to Advertise" conference last week, Mr Shelbourne flew in the face of received wisdom that likeability is the best route to effectiveness — that theory being that if you can get your audience to laugh or feel good, they will correspondingly remember the ad and smile on your product.

"Liking be damned. Effectiveness

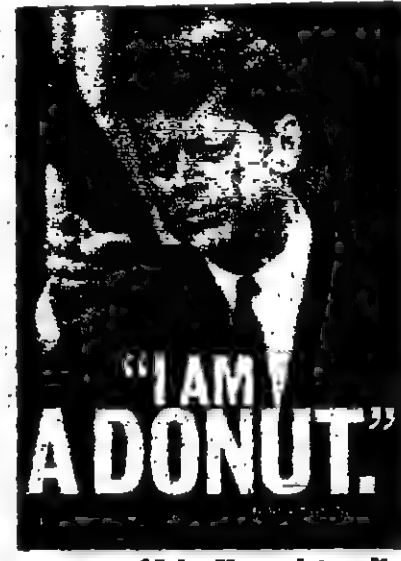
goes hand in hand with irritation," he said, then made his point by showing a series of commercials such as the infuriatingly memorable Shake 'N' Vac ad from the Seventies.

FAMOUS gaffes made by politicians when speaking foreign languages are to feature in a new press campaign for the translation company Wordbank.

They range from John Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner", which actually means "I am a doughnut", to Winston Churchill, who once addressed a French audience with the equivalent of "When I look at my backside, I see that it's split in two parts". Instead of "When I look at my past..."

The agency Leo Burnett is scouring for some more recent gaffes with which to embarrass prominent British politicians in the pre-election period.

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A poster of John Kennedy's gaffe

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The Jacksons are happily married. OK!

MICHAEL JACKSON, the reclusive and eccentric pop star, broke cover this week in his usual elaborately orchestrated and impeccably hyped style to show off his newborn son and give his first interview in print for 18 years.

In doing so he achieved more than simply denying rumours that his marriage is a sham. His decision to auction photographs of him at home provoked the most astonishing salvo to date in the battle between the two fiercest celebrity magazines: a payout which is being trumpeted as the biggest ever in the history of so-called cheque book journalism. The story in this week's OK! heat its traditional rival Hello!

and was followed up by most national newspapers and television. In the magazine Jackson is shown playing happy families with wife Debbie Rowe and his one-month-old son, the extraordinarily named Prince Michael Junior. While the magazine will not disclose exactly how much it forked out it is understood to be well over £1 million and OK's editor Sharon Ring certainly does not underplay the deal.

"We believe it is the most that anybody has ever paid for a story," she says, but also stresses the other difficulties of dealing with such a superstar. "The money was an important part but there were also months and months of work like all

OK! has pulled off a coup in getting the pop star to give his first interview in 18 years, says Damian Whitworth

scoops. It was like following the yellow brick road but we got to the wizard in the end."

Jackson, of course, — reputedly worth £600 million — hardly needed the fee, though an undisclosed slice of it will be going to his charity Heal the World. But according to OK! he was persuaded to do the interview in order to deny recent reports that his marriage to Debbie Rowe, a nurse, is merely one of convenience.

The line of questioning hard-

ly appears to have been deeply probing but the magazine claims it will list next week the questions that Jackson refused to answer and Ring insists that he was not given an easy ride.

"This is his first interview, other than one on American television, in 18 years. It's a proper interview. We said 'Look, there's all this speculation' and he hits back at the speculative stories. He says it's a proper marriage."

The Jackson scoop is an

audacious bid to take on Hello! which, at nine-years-old, is now the establishment figure in the market having pioneered at-home-with-the-stars journalism that OK! and others have aped.

If OK! is to close on Hello!, however, its robust marketing and scooping will have to be maintained. Hello! is still way out in front selling 536,000 copies a week. Sally Cartwright, publishing director of Hello! claims that the magazine was offered the Jackson scoop but the star was asking too much money. "The amount of money they felt the story was worth and what we felt it was worth were not the same."

OK! has outstripped the other challengers to Hello!'s crown

and built a circulation of 200,000, since it became a weekly publication last year, by providing readers with a slightly different package of beaming celebrities than are to be found in Hello!

One of the magazine's most successful covers ever featured the actress Michelle Collins (Cindy Beale in *EastEnders*) with her baby, and the magazine prides itself on avoiding the minor members of European royalty that crop up in its rival. This approach prompted Ulrika Jonsson to declare that she was bored with the aristocratic profile of Hello! "OK! has more accessible people and a more down-to-earth style than Hello!," she said.

Advertising soon at a cinema near you

Alexandra Frean on the ambitious attempt by the media company Carlton Communications to change the face of cinema advertising

Cinemagoers up and down the country can expect a distinctly new experience as they settle down with their popcorn and Maltesers next month. It is part of an ambitious attempt by the media company Carlton Communications to change the face of big-screen advertising.

For millions of film fans, no outing to the cinema seems complete without experiencing the unmistakable jingle of the advertising contractor Pearl & Dean — "Pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa" — but for Adam Poulter, managing director of Carlton Screen Advertising, it is an irritating irrelevance.

Mr Poulter points out that although 15 years ago Pearl & Dean controlled 70 per cent of all cinema advertising, today it has just 20 per cent.

The rest is controlled by Carlton Screen Advertising (formerly known as Cinema Media), which Carlton Communications bought last summer.

In an attempt to alter the public perception of cinema advertising and expand the business, Carlton has created a striking new film identity, which will play before and after all adverts in the cinemas it is contracted to from April.

It shows a star-shaped branding iron appearing out of pink, purple and red flames and then exploding onto the screen.

Branding iron... brands... advertising. Get it? The imagery, created by the corporate identity guru Martin

Lambie Nairn (responsible among other things for the memorable screen "idents" of BBC2, Channel 4 and Carlton television) is hardly subtle.

Mr Poulter agrees that overcoming the Pearl & Dean legacy will be a struggle. "Their musical soundtrack is everybody's authentic idea of the cinema," he says. "But we felt that we could achieve it by creating an 'ident' that was very strong visually. Cinema is, after all, a form of visual entertainment," he says.

The new screen identity is

more realistic. The high point of British cinema was in 1945 when admissions reached 1.6 billion a year. The advent of television coincided with a steady decline, reaching a low point in 1984 when admissions bottomed at 54 million.

There has been a steady revival since then, due largely to the growth in multiplex cinemas (the first was built in Milton Keynes in 1985).

There are now 2,100 screens in the UK and admissions last year were 124 million. Between 1991 and 1996, 500 multiplex cinemas were built. Land contracts have been signed for a further 385, where construction is expected to start in 1997 and 1998.

"That, simply, is where we see the growth coming from. There will be more screens, bigger audiences and more minitainment," Mr Poulter says.

Unlike America, where cinema has historically been largely ad-free zones, cinema-goers in the UK have come to see cinema adverts as part of the entertainment.

Once the domain of tacky local curry house ads, cinema advertising has made great strides in the past two decades. The steady improvement in production values, special effects, sound quality and graphics in films and trailers has been mirrored in the big screen advertisements that precede them. The latest adverts for Levi's, Pirelli and Virgin Atlantic are all testimony to this. As is the list of new advertisers lured to the cinema



For years, no outing to the cinema was complete without experiencing the unmistakable jingle of the advertising contractor Pearl & Dean

in the last two years — BMW, Häagen-Dazs, Nissan Micra, Sony PlayStation, and Whitbread's Boddingtons.

Providing that the adverts do not last more than 13 minutes, audiences do not just tolerate them, they now frequently welcome them.

Because of the dedicated, distraction-free environment in which they are watched, cinema advertisements are reckoned in the industry to be five times more memorable to viewers than television ads. And because of the nature of the cinema audience, they are arguably easier to target.

Although the core cinema audience of 16 to 30-year-olds has grown by 60 per cent in the past decade, the biggest increases have been at the periphery. The number of 7 to 14-year-olds going to the cinema has tripled over the same time, while the 30-plus age group has quadrupled.

This reflects the widening range of films available to a phenomenon itself made possible by the advent of the multiplex with an increase in children's films, such as *Toy Story*, *Lost World* and *Batman and Robin* at the younger end, and a growth in movies aimed at 30-somethings at the other such as

Sense and Sensibility, and *The English Patient*.

It is among advertisers targeting these two groups that Carlton is expecting most of its growth — confectionery and toy manufacturers at one end of the scale and luxury goods, financial services and cars at the other.

Mr Poulter, who has increased his staff 40 per cent to 51, dismisses industry speculation that the only way he will be able to achieve his target is through a conditional sell of Carlton's television and cinema advertising as a package. "We are an independent, autonomous operation," he insists.

We desperately need publicity for our new season. It gets harder and harder to sell anything. So poor old theatre has to shout louder to gain attention. It hasn't the funds to afford major advertising.

A few years ago, I was casting a play in the West End and suggested a major actor to my producer. "Please don't have him," he said. I couldn't understand this — he was perfectly suited to the part. "He will not give interviews. We can't afford that," explained the producer.

Actors are more reluctant to talk to the press because the rules have changed over the past few years. I know I shall be told that the theatre is lucky to get the amount of space it does. I also understand that we can't expect editors to be puff machines for the theatre. But we have reached a point where most theatre interviews are about sex rather than acting, personal relationships rather than theatre.

I discussed all this with the new Company at the Old Vic. We are a lean and mean organisation, without subsidy and financed by the generous patronage of the Mirvishes, the owners of the Old Vic. We have very little money for advertising. The Company

agreed to help and there are some big names among them that are attractive to the press. We all knew the dangers. Take Lynn Barber.

Being written about by Lynn Barber must be an awesome experience. She is the undoubted star of the proceedings — not her subject — and she is only interested in whom she is interviewing so that she can express her prejudices and parade her resentments. She is bitchy (though usually amusing) and writes brilliantly. She is the Columist of the Year.

Well... Felicity Kendal agreed to do a major interview to promote our Old Vic season. "I suppose it is time I was Barbered," she said cheerfully. I was grateful to her for traipsing off to the slaughter.

And slaughter it was — though there were some nice pictures. There was, unfortunately, very little about Felicity's work at the Old Vic, but a great deal about her private life. Here are two extracts: "Personally, if a man says he fancies Felicity Kendal, I take it as a sign that he is sexually defunct. But don't mind me. I

Theatre critics are only interested in titillation, says Peter Hall

am jealous." And: "Of course, she looked wonderful, wonderful skin, hair, figure — even her neck is unlined — though I was secretly gratified to notice that her hands looked older than mine, hideous knotted bony claws with crimson talons." Then Miss Barber moved on to Felicity's marriages and a list of her presumed lovers.

I greeted Felicity nervously the morning after publication. She was very cheerful. "I was rather dreading it," she said. "But it was fine. I've known people come out of it much worse." And in a sense she was right. I was clear who had come out of it badly, and it wasn't Felicity Kendal.

Matters were not improved a few days later when a bewildered Michael

Pennington came to rehearsal fresh from being interviewed by *The Independent*. The first question had been related to a scene in *Waste*, which the interview had seen. "What's it like to see Felicity Kendal?" he asked. "Do you tongue each other... tongue down the throat?" Michael defended himself. "I think tongues are cheating when it comes to stage kissing. The audience can't see it... playing love scenes is dull."

I imagined an independent headline reading "Pennington denies tonguing Felicity Kendal". In the event, the interview turned out an interesting read, and there were even a few small mentions of the play. Critics think that none of this matters. All that matters is that the theatre is talked about. But it

worries me. Actors are hard-working, generous and responsible people. In my experience, they are no more promiscuous or hypocritical or treacherous than the rest of the population. So I don't like them being represented as sex-obsessed loonies.

The only thing that measures up to sex as a lure for the press is the whiff of conflict. "This is just a mini-National Theatre," said one journalist snidely at our first press conference. "What makes you think people need *The Old Vic*? You're taking on Trevor Nunn, aren't you?"

What I should have done was to ring up my old friends, Richard Eyre and Trevor Nunn at the National Theatre, and Adrian Noble at the Royal Shakespeare Company and warn them that as I desperately needed the occasional front page, they were not to believe the outrageous things they would read the following day. Then I should have stood up and said: "I throw down a gauntlet to Trevor Nunn and his new National Theatre," or "Adrian Noble better watch out — we're after his Barbican

'Most stories are about sex, not acting'

Lambs to the slaughter

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Slaze: homosexuals in the Army:
"lost" antiquities Page 10

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THE TIMES

2

INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



FOCUS

New technology is set to revolutionise global telecoms
PAGES 35-37



HOMES

The professor who makes toxic land fit for people
PAGE 45



SPORT

Collymore recalled by England after injury-list grows
PAGES 47-52

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES
50, 51

WEDNESDAY MARCH 26 1997

National Savings criticised over £50m 'black hole'

By ADAM JONES

AN all-party group of MPs yesterday blamed "deplorable" laxness at the National Savings arm for a £50 million accounting "black hole" and other discrepancies.

A report published by the Select Committee of Public Accounts said National Savings, which manages £57 billion, had failed to heed warnings of fundamental problems in its "seriously inadequate" financial control systems.

It said: "The agency's failure to

tackle in a timely manner the serious weaknesses identified as long ago as the mid 1980s points to a lack of competence on the part of those managing the agency."

It added that previous heads of National Savings had "inadequately discharged" their responsibility to ensure effective financial controls.

The report also cast doubt on the National Savings assertion that fraud in the organisation was tiny. Detected fraud amounted to only £14,000, in just four cases. The MPs said: "The absence of such financial

controls leads to a greatly increased risk that fraud could occur and remain undetected."

The MPs were investigating the findings of the National Audit Office (NAO). Last October the NAO said there were massive discrepancies in National Savings' 1994 accounts. Mistakes in two "suspense accounts", used as clearing stations for investors' funds, led to a £50 million liability being inexplicably registered. Other discrepancies involved £12 million that should have been due from Post

Office Counters. The problems stem from a period before the arrival of Peter Bureau, the current chief executive, who joined from the banking industry last year.

He told MPs that overall mistakes have been reduced to a net £3 million in favour of the Treasury. There was never any question of customers losing money.

A spokeswoman for National Savings said: "We are studying the Public Accounts Committee Report. We are going to be discussing the issue with the

Treasury before we give our considered response to Parliament."

The agency has said that it will complete its investigations into the discrepancies by the end of 1997.

The report also said: "We are concerned at the lack of senior finance staff with appropriate accountancy qualifications." National Savings is recruiting to remedy the problem.

John Patterson, head of National Savings from 1986-1991, said it has been historically difficult to recruit senior accountancy staff on civil

service pay. He said he employed a qualified accountant as finance director.

Mr Patterson declined to comment on other parts of the report, which he had not seen. But he said a favourable official report on the agency had been issued in the year of his retirement.

David Butler, who retired as chief executive in 1995, declined to comment on the MPs' criticism of previous management.

Pennington, page 29

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Dow Jones	8927.53	(+22.28)
S&P Composite	795.01	(+4.12)

US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Yield	5.85%	(5.82%)

LONDON MARKET		
3-mth Interbank	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Life long gilt	100 1/8%	(100 1/8%)

STERLING		
New York	1.6170*	(1.6197)
London	1.6190	(1.6122)
DM	2.7372	(2.7277)
FF	6.2250	(6.1820)
SP	2.3730	(2.3501)
Yen	200.58	(197.98)
S Index	98.2	(97.4)

DOLLAR		
London	1.6110*	(1.6088)
DM	5.7079*	(5.6930)
SP	1.4663*	(1.4583)
Yen	183.03*	(182.98)
S Index	104.5	(104.1)

Tokyo close Yen	193.31	
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Brent 15-day (Lm)	\$19.75	(\$19.80)
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London close	\$348.15	(\$350.50)
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* denotes midday trading price

Pru wins ScotAm with offer of £2.15bn

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

PRUDENTIAL Corporation has triumphed in the bidding war for Scottish Amicable, the mutual life insurer, with an offer worth a total of £2.15 billion.

Scottish Amicable policyholders will share a cash-and-bonus package worth more than £1.5 billion.

Scottish Amicable's board confirmed yesterday that it would recommend the offer, worth an average £1,400 to each of its 1.1 million with-profits policyholders.

The Pru is paying £850 million from its shareholders' and policyholders' funds for the business and name of ScotAm. Of this, £600 million will be paid in cash to policyholders on completion of the deal, and a further £250 million paid in bonuses over the life of policies.

Under the terms of the offer, ScotAm policyholders will be given a further £500 million from the surplus in their own life fund. In order to smooth returns during lean stock market years, Prudential will lend the fund £1.3 billion for investment purposes.

The disappointed bidders, AMP and Abbey National, are now expected to turn their attention to other life insurers, although Abbey said yesterday that it had "no plans at present" to buy another life company.

Under the proposals, Scottish Amicable's life fund will be closed to new business, demutualised and become a subsidiary of Prudential.

A new company called Scottish Amicable Life plc will operate as a separate company selling its own products through independent financial

advisers (IFAs) and appointed representatives (ARs).

Scottish Amicable said the average payment to members would be £1,400, comprising £550 in cash from Prudential shareholders' and policyholders' funds to compensate for the loss of membership rights; £430 as a special reversionary bonus paid partly from Prudential and partly from the Scottish Amicable life fund surplus; and extra payments over the lifetime of the policy from the surplus. The total amount will vary according to policy size, type and age.

Sir Peter Davis, group chief executive of Prudential, said Prudential would gain exposure to the growing IFA market and add mortgage, personal pension, unit-linked and long-term care products to Prudential's portfolio.

He said the acquisition would initially dilute earnings until new business had been built up, but this would not show on the balance sheet until the interim results in 1998. Prudential share rose 15 1/2 p to 555 1/2 p.

Scottish Amicable had originally planned to end its mutual status and float on the stock exchange in two or three years' time, but Abbey National made a bid, followed by Prudential and AMP.

Prudential will have funds under management totalling more than £100 billion after the merger.

Prudential has guaranteed that 1,500 employees at Scottish Amicable's headquarters will be retained for at least three years. The board of Scottish Amicable, which was criticised for constructing a generous share benefit scheme under the original demutualisation plans, will be eligible for Prudential's long-term incentive scheme if they become Prudential senior managers.

Sir Peter said that the Prudential was considering incorporating Scottish Amicable's investment management division, based in Glasgow, into its international network of fund management centres, although the matter was "still under discussion". It employs 280 staff.

The proposals will be subject to a 75 per cent vote in favour by members at a special general meeting in June, and the deal is likely to be completed in the autumn.

Pennington, page 29



Davis: adding products



Oliver Whitehead, chief executive of Alfred McAlpine, reflects yesterday on the company's return to the black with profits of £9.4 million last year

Quarter-point rise for US rates

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

AMERICAN interest rates were raised by a quarter point yesterday, the first touch on the monetary brakes by the US Federal Reserve for more than two years.

The Federal Open Market Committee, which met yesterday, lifted its key Federal Funds rate by 0.25 per cent to 5.50 per cent but left the discount rate unchanged at 5 per cent.

The Fed, which has not changed monetary policy since January 1996, when it cut rates by a quarter point, said it had decided to raise rates in light of persisting

strength in the economy. The rate rise was a "prudent step" aimed at extending the economic expansion and emphasised the importance of maintaining low inflation for the overall health of the economy.

The decision was widely expected but shares were still somewhat volatile in the immediate aftermath. Just before the news, the Dow Jones industrial average had been quoted about 15 points higher. In the minutes after the decision was announced, it rallied to a gain of about 40 as investors expressed relief that

the Fed had not announced a more aggressive rise in rates. But then the Dow turned lower again to record a loss of about ten points.

European stock and bond markets had rallied in advance of the news, cheered by Wall Street's resilience this week despite widespread expectations that American rates would go up.

The FT-SE 100 index finished 55.9 points higher at 4,270.7, recovering some of the 209 points lost over the previous six sessions, and reacting to Wall Street's 100-point recovery on Monday. As the

London market closed, the Dow Jones industrial average was quoted 28 points higher.

The Fed's move had already been priced into stock market levels after Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, all but confirmed to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress the Fed would raise rates, when he emphasised the strength of the American economy and the importance of acting preemptively to head off inflationary pressures.

Leading article, page 19
Keynes, the prodigal, page 31

Stores line up in Littlewoods sale

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

ABOUT a dozen retailers, including the main supermarket groups, are believed to have entered the running to buy Littlewoods' chain of 135 high street stores.

Sales memoranda were sent out last week by BZW, Littlewoods' advisers, and potential buyers are expected to come back with firm offers in about six weeks, market sources say. Littlewoods is expected to raise more than £500 million.

Property companies have been excluded from the bidding, the sources say, but retailers, including Asda, Tesco, J Sainsbury and Safeway have been sent a copy of the detailed memorandum. Stores groups including Kingfisher, Marks & Spencer, Storehouse and Next are also believed to be in the running. However, none is under any obligation to proceed with a bid.

So far, only companies willing to bid alone have been included but some property companies are believed to be keen to join consortia.

Oftel orders cut in cost of calls to mobile phones

By ERIC REGULY

THE cost of making calls to mobile phones is too expensive and should come down by about 30 per cent, Don Cruickshank, the Director-General of Telecommunications, said yesterday.

He gave British Telecom and Vodafone and Cellnet, the two largest mobile phone companies, a year to cut the charges to levels that more realistically reflect their true costs. Mr Cruickshank said: "My firm view is that prices are too high, so the industry can act or I will."

Vodafone, operator of the largest mobile phone network, agreed to reduce its charges but said that it had hoped to do so over the next three or four years. "But if Oftel wants us to do it sooner, that's okay with us," a spokesman said.

Oftel's comments were triggered by complaints from consumers and businesses about the relatively high cost of making calls to mobile telephones from

a fixed BT telephone. The cost now exceeds the price of making fixed-line calls to New York.

BT charges its retail customers 32p per minute to call a Vodafone or Cellnet mobile phone. About three quarters of this amount is paid to the mobile phone companies to deliver calls to their customers; BT keeps the rest. Mr Cruickshank said: "In my view, the average retail rate to call a mobile network from a BT phone might come down by about another 10p per minute."

BT and the mobile phone companies will now have to negotiate lower interconnection charges with each other, allowing the retail prices to fall. Vodafone and Cellnet, which is 60 per cent owned by BT, have been using the high call charges to help subsidise handset prices. Almost seven million handsets are in use in the United Kingdom.

Back in black

ALFRED McAlpine, the construction group, returned to profit in 1996, earning £9.4 million before tax compared with losses of £23.5 million in 1995. Turnover fell to £593.6 million from £572.26 million. Earnings were 10p a share (37.2p loss). The dividend is held at 7p, with a 4p final.

Reversing

Rover, the carmaker now owned by BMW, suffered losses of DM279 million last year, compared with DM335 million in 1995. John Major nevertheless praised the success of the British motor industry during a visit to the West Midlands.

Page 28

Shattering

A profits warning from Pilkington, the glass group, sent the shares down to their lowest level for more than three years. Forecasts were cut from £175 million to £130 million for the year.

Page 33, Tempus 30

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THE LIVE CENTRE
TIMES 26-3

Greenpeace oils the wheels of conservation

By CARL MORTSHED

GREENPEACE has decided to take on the oil companies by making an application for the entire 22,000 sq miles in the Government's 17th oil licensing round.

The environmental group, which infuriated the oil industry with its campaign against the dumping of the

Brent Spar, has invested £3,000 in a formal application to Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, for all 25 blocks. The licences are normally awarded to oil companies for exploration purposes but, instead of drilling wells, Greenpeace proposes to hunt whales and dolphins.

Greenpeace said the move was part of its campaign to limit fossil

fuel use. In a letter to Mr Lang, the organisation states that it wishes to be considered "operator and guardian of the licence area", located mainly in the Atlantic Frontier, west of the Shetlands. The letter requests the Government to honour its commitment to the UN climate convention by granting Greenpeace a "production licence for non-interven-

tion". A Greenpeace delegation met Department of Energy officials yesterday to present detailed proposals. A spokesman for the group said the officials seemed bemused but invited them for further consultations. The government's criteria for awarding licences is "the need for expeditious, thorough efficient and safe exploration to identify oil and gas resources

... with due regard to environmental considerations". Greenpeace's application hinges on the last point.

"The oil industry was not amused; a spokesman for the Offshore Operators Association said: 'Whatever Greenpeace might believe, life today and the expectations of consumers depend on the adequate availability of fossil fuels.'"

Deutsche chief set to retire

Deutsche Bank confirmed Sir John Craven is to retire as chairman of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, its investment banking arm, at the end of June.

The German bank, which is expected to report 1996 net profits of DM2.2 billion today, up from DM2.1 billion in 1995, will also confirm that the cost of bailing out Morgan Grenfell and compensating up to 90,000 unit trust investors after the Peter Young affair is about £380 million. Compensation payments are due to be made shortly. Morgan Grenfell is braced for a fine by Imro, the City watchdog, that could top £1 million.

Sir John is to join the international advisory board of Deutsche Bank. Today, he becomes non-executive chairman of Lonrho, the international trading conglomerate.

FBD ahead

FBD Holdings, the farm insurer in the Republic of Ireland, increased pre-tax profits 5 per cent to Ir£14 million last year. Earnings increased 5.6 per cent to Ir£26 a share. The final dividend is 4.35p, lifting the total 14 per cent to 7.7p.

Bardon slips

Bardon, the quarrying and aggregates group, suffered a 4 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £23.4 million (£24.3 million) last year. Earnings dropped to 2.4p (2.5p) a share. A final dividend of 1.2p, due on July 11, holds the total at 2p.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.14	1.88
Austria Sch	26.10	18.80
Belgium Fr	36.98	34.88
Canada \$	2.328	2.108
Cyprus Cyp£	0.848	0.790
Denmark Kr	10.93	10.13
France Fr	8.92	7.97
Germany DM	1.97	1.82
Greece Dr	2.87	2.68
Hong Kong H	14.8	12.14
Ireland P	1.08	1.00
Israel S	1.75	1.57
Italy Lit	2077	1877
Japan Yen	213.20	197.20
Malta M	0.188	0.180
Netherlands Gld	3.203	2.973
Norway Kr	11.36	10.65
Portugal Esc	204.00	186.50
S Africa Rd	7.75	6.80
Spain Ptas	941.50	224.50
Sweden Kr	12.12	12.12
Switzerland Fr	2.48	2.50
Turkey Lira	816000	198000
USA \$	1.713	1.585

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Japanese prosecutors raid Nomura offices



Investigators on their way to the offices of Nomura, which is suspected of passing on money to extortionists

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

JAPANESE prosecutors raided Nomura Securities yesterday on suspicion that Japan's highest stockbroker funnelled profits from illegal stock deals to extortionists.

The raid was carried out by a combined team from the Tokyo District Public Prosecutors' Office and the Securities Exchange Surveillance Commission (SEC). Up to 150 officials were involved in raids on Nomura's Tokyo head office and ten other buildings.

Prosecutors have questioned two Nomura managing directors for allegedly giving preferential treatment to a *sakaiya*, a type of racketeer who specialises in extorting cash from firms by threatening to reveal their dubious practices.

Investigators are focusing on transactions in March 1995, when the two executives allegedly passed on 38 million yen (£190,000) in profits from stock deals to a property firm owned by the brother of a prominent *sakaiya*.

The Securities and Exchange Law banned stockbrokers from conducting discretionary stock transactions after a 1991 scandal.

Investigators also searched the homes of Hideo Sakamaki, the company's former president, and Masashi Suzuki, his successor. Mr Sakamaki resigned as president on March 14.

Major praise for British motor industry as Rover cuts losses

BY OLIVER AUGUST

ROVER, the German-owned auto manufacturer, incurred losses of DM279 million last year, compared to DM335 million in 1995. BMW, its parent company, reported yesterday. But John Major, nevertheless, praised the success of the British motor industry during a visit to the West Midlands.

BMW, which bought Rover

in 1994, is pumping billions of marks into the company in the hope of seeing it turn a profit by 2000. In 1996 BMW invested DM1.2 billion in Rover and plans another DM1.5 billion of investment this year.

Rover's sales rose to DM15.2 billion from DM13 billion, BMW said.

The German motor company also co-operates with

Rolls-Royce to build jet engines for small aircraft. BMW Rolls-Royce, the joint venture, reduced pre-tax losses before exceptional items to DM125 million in 1996, while sales rose to DM217 million from DM112 million.

Bernd Pischersrieder, BMW chairman, said the joint venture will continue its development work on the BR700

engines while increasing production facilities.

Despite its foreign ownership, Mr Major used the example of Rover to show that in the last 20 years there had been an "absolute revolution" in the British motor industry.

The Prime Minister said: "In the 1970s the British motor car industry was a basket case ... people thought the motor

industry was dead. Today it is a thriving, growing, successful industry with massive exports. It's a huge success story because we changed the trade union legislation and the tax structure, and because we've improved industrial relations.

"People round the world can see that this is one of the best countries to invest in, and there's been a huge amount of it coming in from abroad. We need to protect that."

Mr Major said Rover could be badly hit if Britain takes the wrong decision on monetary union. If Britain does not join because the euro turns out to be a weak currency, then the sterling exchange rate could be forced up. He said: "Would that matter? Well go down the road to Rover and ask them if they would sell their cars if they had an artificially high rate of sterling."

Pennington, page 29

BZW lost £11.5m on hedged position

BY ROBERT MILLER
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays, made a loss of £11.5 million in July 1996 after a hedged trading position in the volatile foreign exchange markets went wrong. BZW is

understood to have used the bank's own funds. Two members of BZW's derivatives department, Paul Ellis and Paul Deust, left by mutual consent shortly after the incident. City observers were quick to draw comparisons with NatWest's £90 mil-

lion "black hole", which came to light last month. Peter Baillie, BZW spokesman, said: "Senior management in BZW's market division and its independent risk management function took action to hedge a trading position which had been ad-

versely affected by an unanticipated and rapid movement in the currency markets. Management had been fully aware of the position and acted within minutes ... to reduce the position risk."

Takeover bid likely at Country Casuals

MARK BUNCE, chief executive of Country Casuals, may launch a takeover bid for the troubled clothing retailer, the company revealed yesterday. It is the second time in little more than a year that Country Casuals has been the target of a takeover bid from one of its founding directors. The company beat off an offer of £26.8 million from John Shannon, a former chief executive of the company, at the end of 1995. Mr Bunce and his wife Christina, who is commercial director, are the largest single shareholders in the company with a 10 per cent stake. They are believed to be talking to financial backers with a bid expected in excess of the £40p offered by Mr Shannon. Mr Bunce also holds a 5.9 per cent stake, currently valued at £12 million, in Oasis, which the management team at Country Casuals helped to rescue from receivership. Shares in Country Casuals rose 7½p to 102½p. The shares have slumped in the past six months after two profit warnings. Country Casuals said it would continue with its plans to sell the loss-making Elvi out-size fashion chain and the Lerose clothes-making business, which were put on the market earlier this year. Mr Bunce and his wife will not take part in the evaluation of offers for the two businesses.

Scholl works on US link

SCHOLL, the footwear and footwear company, said yesterday that it is forging closer links with Scholl's North American operations, which are owned by Schering-Plough, the US pharmaceuticals group. The company hopes for a formal alliance. Scholl reported a pre-tax profit before exceptional items of £20.6 million, on turnover of £212 million, up 2.5 per cent, in the year to December 31. After a £35.7 million charge, the pre-tax loss was £15.1 million (£17 million profit). A 4.7p final dividend makes a 7.7p total, up 10 per cent.

Rea payout is held

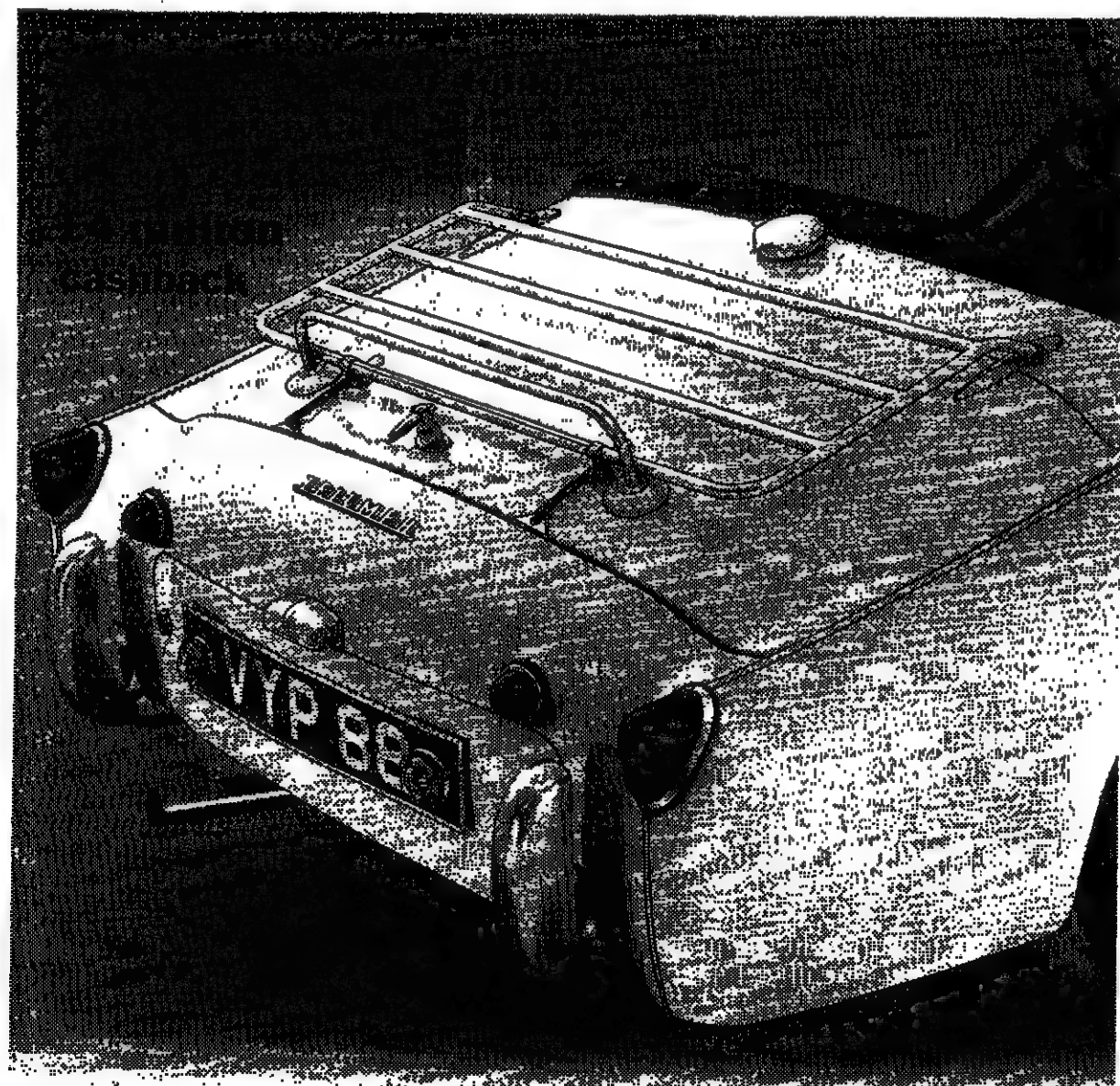
REA BROTHERS, the banking and financial services group, is holding its final dividend at 0.5p, due on May 9, to give an unchanged annual payout of 1p in spite of a 35 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £1.8 million. Sir Hugh Cubitt, chairman, said that funds under management rose to £948 million, from £706 million, in 1995 and that Finsbury Asset Management was now fully integrated with the group's investment management arm. Earnings per share rose to 2.5p, from 2.05p, although dealing profits fell to £413,000, from £607,000.

Pension warning

JOHN HAYES, chairman of the new statutory Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra), yesterday published guidance for pension scheme actuaries and auditors on their "whistleblowing" duties when the 1995 Pensions Act takes effect on April 6. The new pensions watchdog gave warning that "apparently minor issues may be symptomatic of deeper problems" and he added that "dishonesty and deliberate disregard of the legislation remain a top priority for investigation and punishment by Opra".

IRG expects upturn

INDEPENDENT RADIO GROUP, the owner of six commercial radio stations, including Scot FM in Central Scotland and 1458 Lite AM in Manchester, said it expects to break even this year and make a profit in 1998. The company, which floated on the Alternative Investment Market in 1995, reported a pre-tax loss of £3 million in the 16 months to December 31, on turnover of £23 million. The loss before exceptional items was £1.4 million. Independent, which has £4.4 million in cash, intends to bid for several new radio licences this year.



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ROBEKO GROUP

ROBEKO N.V.
(investment company with a variable capital)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

to be held on Friday, 25th April, 1997, at Concert and Congress building "de Doelen", entrance Kruijsplein 30, Rotterdam, at 9.30 hours.

AGENDA

1. Opening
2. To receive and adopt the Report of the Management Board for the financial year 1996
3. To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts for the financial year 1996
4. To determine the appropriation of the profit
5. To determine the remuneration of Supervisory Directors
6. To compose the Supervisory Board
7. Any other business

Copies of the full agenda and of the Annual Reports for 1996 can be obtained from National Westminster Bank PLC, NatWest Investments Counter, c/o NatWest Markets, 1st Floor, 135 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3UR or Robeco U.K. Limited, 4 Carlos Place, Mayfair, London W1Y 5AE. Telephone: 0171-409 3507.

Holders of Bearer Share Certificates desirous of attending or being represented at the Meeting, should lodge their Certificates by hand (postal deliveries will not be accepted) with the National Westminster Bank PLC, NatWest Investments Counter, c/o NatWest Markets, 1st Floor, 135 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3UR (between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) in exchange for a receipt, not later than Friday, 18th April, 1997.

Beneficial owners whose Bearer Share Certificates are presently deposited with a Bank must obtain a Certificate of Deposit signed by the Bank as evidence that such Bank is holding the Share Certificates. The Certificate of Deposit must be lodged against receipt, by that Bank, with the National Westminster Bank PLC, in accordance with the requirements stated above.

The receipt for Bearer Share Certificates or Certificate of Deposit will constitute evidence of a shareholder's entitlement to attend and vote at the Meeting and should be presented at the door of the Meeting Hall. If a holder desires to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member of the Company, to attend and vote in his stead, a form of proxy may be obtained from the National Westminster Bank PLC as above and this form of proxy must be presented at the door of the Meeting Hall together with the receipt for the Bearer Share Certificates or Certificate of Deposit.

Beneficial owners of Sub-share Certificates registered in the name of National Provincial Bank (Nominees) Limited, holders of Registered Full Shares and Shareholders who maintain a Shareholder's Account with the Company wishing to attend and vote at the Meeting or to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in their stead, must signify their intention in writing to the Secretary of Robeco N.V. or Robeco U.K. (whichever is applicable), at the Coolidge 120, NL-3011 AG Rotterdam, Netherlands to arrive not later than Friday, 18th April, 1997.

Service contracts are not entered into with the Directors, who hold office in accordance with the Articles of Association.

BY ORDER OF THE MANAGEMENT
ROTTERDAM
Dated this 26th day of March, 1997.

ROLINCO N.V.
(investment company with a variable capital)
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

to be held on Friday, 25th April, 1997, at Concert and Congress building "de Doelen", entrance Kruijsplein 30, Rotterdam, at 11.45 hours.

AGENDA

1. Opening
2. To receive and adopt the Report of the Management Board for the financial year 1996
3. To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts for the financial year 1996
4. To determine the appropriation of the profit
5. To determine the remuneration of Supervisory Directors
6. To compose the Supervisory Board
7. Any other business

Copies of the full agenda and of the Annual Reports for 1996 can be obtained from National Westminster Bank PLC, NatWest Investments Counter, c/o NatWest Markets, 1st Floor, 135 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3UR or Robeco U.K. Limited, 4 Carlos Place, Mayfair, London W1Y 5AE. Telephone: 0171-409 3507.

Holders of Bearer Share Certificates desirous of attending or being represented at the Meeting, should lodge their Share Certificates by hand (postal deliveries will not be accepted) with the National Westminster Bank PLC, NatWest Investments Counter, c/o NatWest Markets, 1st Floor, 135 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3UR (between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) as follows: INFORMATIVE MEETING - NOT LATER THAN FRIDAY, 18TH APRIL, 1997. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - NOT LATER THAN MONDAY, 21ST APRIL, 1997, IN EXCHANGE FOR A RECEIPT.

Beneficial owners whose Bearer Share Certificates are presently deposited with a Bank must obtain a Certificate of Deposit signed by the Bank as evidence that such Bank is holding the Share Certificates. This Certificate must be lodged against receipt, by that Bank, with the National Westminster Bank PLC, in accordance with the requirements stated above.

The receipt for the Share Certificates or Certificate of Deposit will constitute evidence of a shareholder's entitlement to attend and vote at the Meeting and should be presented at the door of the Meeting Hall. If a holder desires to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member of the Company, to attend and vote in his stead, a form of proxy may be obtained from the National Westminster Bank PLC as above and this form of proxy must be presented at the door of the Meeting Hall together with the receipt for the Share Certificates or Certificate of Deposit.

Shareholders who maintain a Shareholder's Account with the Company, wishing to attend either or both Meetings or to appoint a proxy in their stead, must signify their intention in writing to the Secretary, Rolinco N.V. c/o Avvento B.V., Coolidge 120, NL-3011 AG Rotterdam, Netherlands to arrive not later than the dates indicated above.

Although proxies may attend, votes will not be cast at the Informative Meeting.

Copies of the full agenda and of the Annual Report for 1996 can be obtained from National Westminster Bank PLC at the address shown above or Robeco U.K. Limited, 4 Carlos Place, Mayfair, London W1Y 5AE. Telephone: 0171-409 3507.

Service contracts are not entered into with the Directors, who hold office in accordance with the Articles of Association.

BY ORDER OF THE MANAGEMENT
PHILIPSBURG
Dated this 26th day of March 1997.

RORENTO N.V.
(registered in Philippines, St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles)
INFORMATIVE MEETING FOR SHAREHOLDERS

to be held on Friday, 25th April, 1997, at Concert and Congress building "de Doelen", entrance Kruijsplein 30, Rotterdam, at 14.30 hours.

AGENDA

1. Opening
2. To discuss the Report of the Management Board for the financial year 1996
3. To discuss the Annual Accounts for the financial year 1996
4. To discuss the appropriation of the profit
5. To discuss the remuneration of Supervisory Directors
6. To discuss the composition of the Supervisory Board
7. To discuss the composition of the Management Board
8. To discuss a proposal to alter the Articles of Association
9. Any other business

Holders of Bearer Share Certificates desirous of attending or being represented at the above stated Meetings, should lodge their Share Certificates by hand (postal deliveries will not be accepted) with the National Westminster Bank PLC, NatWest Investments Counter, c/o NatWest Markets, 1st Floor, 135 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3UR (between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) as follows: INFORMATIVE MEETING - NOT LATER THAN FRIDAY, 18TH APRIL, 1997. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - NOT LATER THAN MONDAY, 21ST APRIL, 1997, IN EXCHANGE FOR A RECEIPT.

Beneficial owners whose Bearer Share Certificates are presently deposited with a Bank must obtain a Certificate of Deposit signed by the Bank as evidence that such Bank is holding the Share Certificates. This Certificate must be lodged against receipt, by that Bank, with the National Westminster Bank PLC, in accordance with the requirements stated above.

The receipt for the Share Certificates or Certificate of Deposit will constitute evidence of a shareholder's entitlement to attend and vote at the Meeting and should be presented at the door of the Meeting Hall. If a holder desires to appoint a proxy, who need not be a member of the Company, to attend and vote in his stead, a form of proxy may be obtained from the National Westminster Bank PLC as above and this form of proxy must be presented at the door of the Meeting Hall together with the receipt for the Share Certificates or Certificate of Deposit.

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Service contracts are not entered into with the Directors, who hold office in accordance with the Articles of Association.

BY ORDER OF THE MANAGEMENT
PHILIPSBURG
Dated this 26th day of March 1997.

□ Complex numbers behind Scottish Amicable deal □ National Savings that don't add up □ BZW drops a clanger

Secretive to the end

□ HERE they come — dragged stumbling into the spotlight, blinking behind their horn-rimmed glasses — that largely unknown bunch of Scottish accountants, and secretive to the last. When Scottish Amicable first revealed plans to go public, the trouble was that no one, not even hardened insurance analysts, could understand them.

To ordinary members, the with-profit policyholders, not up with embedded values, reversionary bonuses and all the rest, the document outlining those proposals was gibberish, so it was as well that document became history even as it was printing, as a bidding war broke out for the business. The Prudential has now emerged from a three-sided scrap with the prize. Just why, we do not yet know, and this is important.

The curious thing about reputations in insurance is that they lag behind events. The Pru's is still badly tarred by the mis-selling scandal, even if a reputation of such abysmal behaviour seems unthinkable. The appeal of ScotAm, with a respectable name that does not yet reflect years of relative underperformance against the competition, is obvious.

As we all become more sophisticated, we take advice about financial products and pay for it rather than go automatically to

the heavy advertisers. Hence the growth of independent financial advisers who take a cut for pointing us towards the right policy. Such IFAs are about as likely to pass a Pru policy across the table as they are a not-too-recently deceased cat, but ScotAm still, rightly or wrongly, has a bit of cachet.

As ever in a takeover deal, the buyer must emphasise how little is being paid and the seller how much. The awful complexity of this one makes this tightrope walk easier. The Pru is handing over £850 million clean, £600 million in cash and the rest as a special bonus added to the value of existing policies. There is a £1.3 billion loan to the ScotAm's life fund, at the normal commercial rate. This more than balances the exit of the fund's £300 million surplus, which comes out as payments to policyholders at the end of their policies.

The board at ScotAm are doing rather well, it seems. Under the Pru's original plans, and perhaps with AMP as well, they would have walked the plank. As it is they are even included in an incentives scheme

for Pru executives sufficiently generous to attract criticism last year, wrongly perhaps, from the institutions.

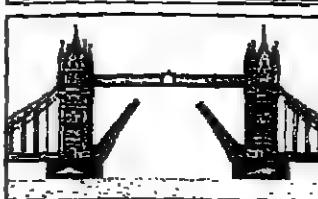
Such a cosy outcome should have ScotAm voters looking very seriously before the June vote at the terms from AMP and the Abbey National turned down in favour of the Pru. These, we are told, are not quite ready for publication yet.

Hmm. There was an air yesterday of a deal already done, one of those takeover bids already with the blessing of 50 per cent-plus of shareholders' votes. Not so. ScotAm policyholders, you have a vote — use it.

Cornering rats at the PAC

□ COMMITTEE rooms at the House of Commons are designed to maximise the discomfort of those lost souls appearing before MPs. The "witnesses", a term synonymous with defendant, huddle together like terrified rodents behind an undersized desk, while the MPs surround them in an imperious horseshoe.

PENNINGTON



It may be unhealthy, encouraging displays of chest-beating from politicians. But sometimes the situation justifies it, such as when the top brass at National Savings, the Government's savings arm, appeared before the Select Committee of Public Accounts.

Tens of millions of pounds were "misplaced" in various National Savings internal accounts, auditors found last year. A £50 million deficit topped the list of "black holes" — the phrase of the month, it seems.

Given the political sensitivity of National Savings — custodian of the nest eggs of millions of pensioners and other vulnerable groups, and all guaranteed by the Treasury — the MPs should

have been in attack-dog mode. Yet they were strangely civil on the day, placated by an authoritative performance from Peter Bazeau, the chief executive who arrived from the banking sector last year and is convincing in his efforts to clear up the mess left by his predecessors.

The MPs have since recovered some of their bite. The written report on the matter "deplores" the slackness in financial controls. With memorable understatement, they declare themselves "concerned at the lack of senior finance staff with appropriate accountancy qualifications". In other words, they couldn't add up.

Why would they need to? After all, by the end of 1995-96, National Savings was managing only a trifling £57 billion. It all points to a "lack of competence" on the part of those running the agency in the past, the committee concludes. Culture of incompetence, more like.

A shame that previous chief executives such as David Butler and John Patterson were not forced to huddle before MPs instead. Too late for that. Mr

Butler, by the way, is now at the Princess Royal Trust for Carers. Nice to know the Establishment looks after its own.

When the big brains blunder

□ HERE we go hunting black holes in the spring (again). There has been a story floating around the City for a week or more now that Someone, Somewhere has Blundered. One of the securities houses has taken a huge position and watched, horrified, the market going the wrong way, or so says the scurlebut in the low dives that traders frequent.

Let us therefore hope that the rumours referred to Barclays de Zoete Wedd, because nobody really enjoys these black hole stories, do they? BZW lost £11.5 million last summer after having to hedge against some unwise currency positions taken by a couple of big brains, now departed. The good news is there was no mispricing, unlike at the NatWest and its £90 million loss earlier this month. Even better, management were on to it, and

someone up the chain could by some miracle follow what the big brains had been up to. Hey, you win some, you lose some.

Up to a point. It is true that there is a spectrum of loss between dropping £90 million on barely understood derivatives and £90 at the 3.30 at Kempton Park, and somewhere on that spectrum a normal trading loss turns into a black hole. In the current climate we are all too inclined to describe the former as the latter. But £11.5 million is an awful lot to lose in the course of normal share dealing.

It is, however, the nature of such options and derivatives that subsequent losses can be so huge as to be easily audible above the normal chatter and hum of a typical trading business.

Kindest cut of all

□ A BREAKTHROUGH for the next Chancellor from the Royal Economic Society's annual conference, which paved the way for a massive but painless spending cut. Hard to believe as they walk through the door, but a third of all graduates are over-educated, it seems: even after six years in work, their jobs need mere O or A levels. So slice off the tail of able students and you save a third of the higher education budget as well as a lot of personal frustration. Or not.

Chelsfield aims for hotel float

Chelsfield, the property group, plans to float off its hotel and leisure interests.

The group yesterday raised £62 million in a placing of 20 million shares at 31p to buy the London and New York Westbury hotels from Granada. It is buying the London hotel freehold from AMP for £30 million. It is expected to package the hotels with its Wentworth leisure business.

Chelsfield's net asset value rose 22 per cent last year, to 225p. Profits grew from £10.6 million to £14.4 million. The year's dividend rises 9 per cent, to 5p.

Hunting aim

Hunting, the defence group, has ruled out merger amid restructuring in European aerospace. Pre-tax 1996 profits fell to £6.8 million, from £31 million, after write-offs in the aviation unit. Profits before exceptional losses were £44.4 million (£38.1 million). The annual dividend stays 6p.

Clansman off

Macfarlane Group (Clansman), the packaging company, had a 3.3 per cent fall in pre-tax profits, to £20.4 million, in 1996, after a slowdown in orders from whisky companies. Earnings per share fell 5.4 per cent, to 11.4p, but the dividend rises from 3.9p to 4.09p, with a final 2.62p.

Burn better

Burn Stewart Distillers sees signs that whisky's pricing environment is improving. Profits reached £1.8 million in the half year to December 31, up from a £900,000 loss. The interim dividend remains 1.7p.

Hodder up

Hodder Headline, the publisher, lifted pre-tax profits 16 per cent, to £5.6 million, in 1996. Earnings per share were 13.3p (13.1p). A final dividend of 4.5p (same) makes 6.5p (same).

Kier ahead

Kier, the construction company, saw pre-tax profit rise to £3 million, from £2.75 million, in the half year to December 31. Kier pays no interim dividend.

Insurer hit

Losses by its Irish National Insurance Company, now sold, halved 1996 pre-tax profits of New Ireland Holdings to 1.15 million. A 1.1389p final dividend makes 1.1856 (1.1656p).

Tunnel fire may add £60m to P&O revenues

By FRASER NELSON

THE fire in the Channel Tunnel last November has left a profitable legacy for P&O. The shipping to property conglomerate, which could gain up to £60 million in extra revenue this year because of the disaster, according to analysts.

The company, whose cross-

Channel freight business has been crippled since the opening of the Channel Tunnel, is expected to claw back some £40 million in cargo alone until the tunnel is given the all-clear by safety inspectors.

No lorry has been able to use the tunnel since the fire four months ago, and

Eurotunnel's freight service is not due to reopen until May.

As P&O returned its 1996 results yesterday, analysts said that it was on course to take the lion's share of the £100 million revenue understood to be generated by Eurotunnel's freight business each year. As ferries can carry the capacity with minimal extra expenses, a substantial amount of the extra revenue will translate straight into profit.

However, analysts said that the boost was only a short-term honeymoon which will last until Eurotunnel's freight trains start again. One said: "P&O's ferries have a fighting chance of staying in profit: Eurotunnel doesn't."

Competition from the Channel Tunnel in the first 11 months of 1996 forced operating profits at P&O's ferry division down to £41 million (£74 million). Operating profits at its containers division fell to £30.3 million (£40.1 million). However, the company surprised the City by returning an increase in group profits for 1996, against the slump that was widely expected. Overall, pre-tax profits grew to £333 million (£320 million) and earnings to 40.1p (37.8p) a share. The dividend is frozen at 30.5p with a final 17p, due on June 10.

Its cruising division delivered the strongest growth. The conglomerate was also lifted by a £12.4 million profit from its disposals, and a 54 per cent rise in profits from property development to £38.8 million. Lord Sterling, chairman, said the company had tackled its two problem areas head on: the container division, by putting it into a joint venture with Nedlloyd, and the ferries division, with a proposed merger with rival Stena.

Even if the merger is blocked by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, he said, P&O would remain the dominant player in the channel ferry market.

He said: "We are the most powerful group with the best ships. There may be some blood on the carpet but in the end there would be one dominant ferry group." He added that it would be "extremely surprising" if the proposed merger were rejected. A decision is not expected until after the election. P&O shares rose 4p to 634½p yesterday.

The group's construction arm remained the largest business, even though turnover fell 10 per cent to £502 million. However, Taylor Woodrow made a profit of only £100,000 from construction and again lost money in the UK market.

A final dividend of 2.75p is due on July 1. This will lift the total to 3.75p, up 25 per cent.

Taylor Woodrow looks to Castle



Colin Parsons, chairman, says confidence remains high

TAYLOR WOODROW, the housebuilding and construction group, has named John Castle, the former managing director of Marley, as the man to replace Tony Palmer as chief executive.

According to contemporary reports, Mr Castle left Marley in early 1993 after being passed over in favour of David Trapnell for the post of chief executive of the building materials group. Yesterday, however, Colin Parsons, Taylor Woodrow's executive chairman, said he had been told that Mr Castle left Marley because he did not want the job.

Mr Castle will take over from Mr Palmer, who is retiring in June after 43 years with the group.

Taylor Woodrow was reporting a 45 per cent rise in annual pre-tax profits to £66.8 million, on sales little changed at £1.19 billion. The improve-

ment was led by the housing arm, which increased profits 40 per cent to £32.8 million. Sales were strong in the UK, US and Canada, and house sales rose 24 per cent to 3,957.

Mr Parsons said the group had seen no sign of the election damaging confidence among purchasers. He added: "We are much more apprehensive about the effect of a rise in interest rates. Buyers are also concerned about seeing prices going up while they are trying to buy houses. It's a very uncomfortable feeling."

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Tempos, page 30

Mis-selling pledge from life insurer

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

LONDON & Manchester. The life insurer and pensions company, has promised to resolve the 6,000 cases of personal pensions mis-selling within the next year.

Tom Pyne, group chief executive, made the pledge as the company reported its annual results, but he admitted that only 75 people had so far been compensated, even though £32 million had been set aside for the purpose.

Trustees of company schemes were "overwhelmed" by the requirements of the Pensions Act and had not provided information on former members, he said.

Earnings per share rose 1.25p to 37.85p. A 13.69p final will be paid on June 12, making 20.29p (18.7p).

SkyePharma sees \$5bn drug sales

By PAUL DURMAN

SKYEPHARMA, the drug company assembled by Ian Gowrie-Smith, Medeva's founder, claimed that its "black box" of drugs in development was expected to have sales of more than \$5 billion.

Mr Gowrie-Smith said the level of sales expected by client companies had doubled since last year's purchase of Jago, the Swiss company that is an expert in controlling the release of active compounds in drugs.

Mr Gowrie-Smith said the \$5 billion estimate was not a "blue sky" forecast, but was conservatively based, taking account of the probability of success of the 11 projects in Jago's black box. Most of these involve improving existing drugs, and consequently carry less risk than developing totally new products. However, the first of these sales will not be made before next year, and

will not accelerate until 1999. SkyePharma yesterday revealed the second of the black box projects. Jago is working with InterCardia of the US to develop a once-daily formulation of a beta-blocker intended to be used to treat congestive heart failure. SkyePharma said the drug could have annual sales of \$400 million.

The other Jago project announced is an asthma drug being developed by Abbott Laboratories of the US.

SkyePharma also reported losses of £11.7 million for the 17 months to December 31. Comparisons with 1995, when the company lost £9.8 million, are obscured by the series of deals that have transformed the group from its origins as Black & Edgington, the marquee tent company. SkyePharma ended 1996 with net cash of £19.3 million.

Bell paid £544,000 at Chime

By JASON NISSE

SIR Tim Bell, who advises the Conservative Party on its election strategy, was paid £544,000 last year as chairman of Chime Communications, the quoted PR group. His remuneration package is in addition to £90,000 of dividends paid on his 10.1 per cent stake in the group.

Chime's operating profits rose a fifth to £3.04 million in the year ended December 31. Pre-tax profits climbed to £3.72 million (£2.5 million). Earnings per share rose from 2.8p to 3.4p and a 1.15p dividend, payable on June 26, makes 1.7p, up 20 per cent.

Chime is looking to make a substantial acquisition of "another well known communications brand".

Hamleys hopes for film boost

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

HAMLEYS, the toy retailer, is putting its faith in Star Wars to revive the toy market this year. Howard Dyer, chairman, said that Hamleys, in just two days last week, sold out of the Star Wars version of the Monopoly board game, launched to coincide with the re-release of the 20-year-old film. It sold 332 in all and took orders for when more arrive.

Mr Dyer believes that this bodes well for other Star Wars goods starting to appear in its Regent Street store and in its smaller outlets and airport shops. Monopoly's manufacturer, Wadding-

ton Games, part of America's Hasbro, said that the new version of the game has now sold out all over the country. The bad news for those who have put in orders for the game — which has Dagobah Swamp in place of the Old Kent Road and the Imperial Palace in place of Mayfair — is that no more will be available here until Christmas.

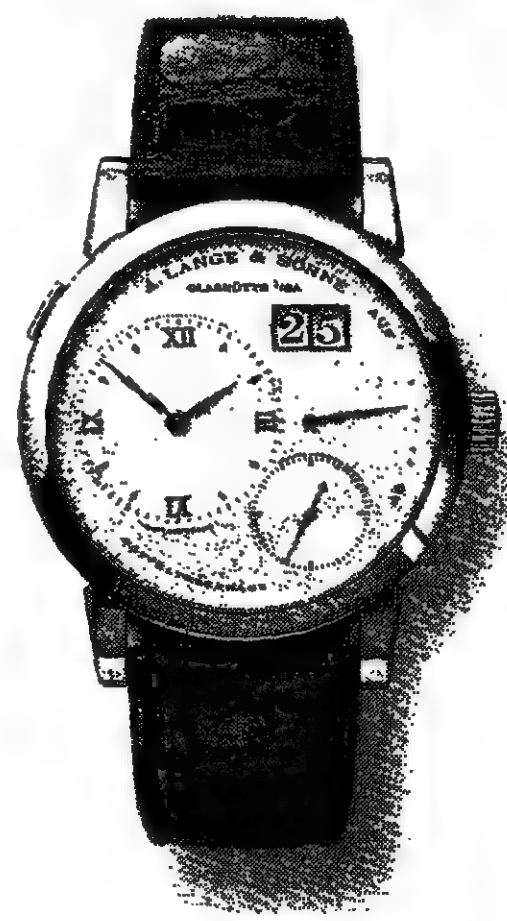
Mr Dyer confirmed that the toy market in the second half of last year, including the usually frantic Christmas period, was strangely flat. He said: "Two companies outperformed the market. We did marginally and Woolworths did very well." The fact that many retailers quickly sold

out of the Christmas favourite, Buzz Lightyear, and could not restock did not help sales figures, he said.

The end result for Hamleys in the year to February 1 was a 5 per cent rise in like-for-like sales and a rise in pre-tax profit to £6.9 million, from £6.38 million. Earnings per share rose from 19.3p to 19.9p. A final dividend of 6p (5.4p), due on June 5, makes a full-year payout of 9p (8.1p).

Trade this year should be aided by the opening of up to 50 House of Toys concessions in Debenhams. The concessions in House of Fraser stores are being closed. Hamleys is to seek more sites in Europe and the Far East in the second half.

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THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Treasury loses a treasure

KENNETH CLARKE bids his farewells this week. After 19 years working for the Treasury, the housekeeper to the Chancellor is retiring.

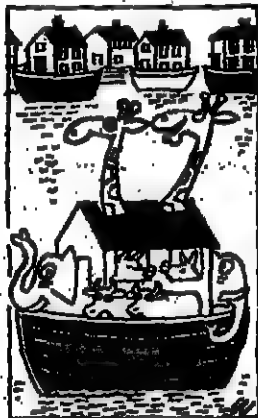
Marie Collier, nicknamed "the lady under the stairs", has served Lord Lawson, John Major, and Norman Lamont during their stays at Downing Street.

The diminutive cockney sparrow will be greatly missed, not more so than by the Chancellor himself, who handed her a House of Commons head scarf at a drinks party to launch this year's Women Into Business Awards.

"Marie is the staff at Number 11," the Chancellor said. "Last year, she joined the club, and was awarded an MBE."

Patient party

MUCH excitement at the Securities and Investments Board, where Anthony Minghella's sister works as head of the enforcement, law and policy support department. Loretta Minghella, sibling to the Oscar-winning director of *The English Patient*, celebrated with SIB colleagues at a cinema on Monday night, before they made their way on to a party. For the record, Loretta's mother makes a cameo appearance in the movie which scooped a total of nine Oscars.



"Haven't you heard? P&O is floating Boris Humes"

Grant's goodbye

SIR Alistair Grant waves goodbye to Safeway. His departure as chairman comes not long after he celebrated his 60th birthday at Claridge's. Sir James Blyth, Sir Peter Davies, Baron Briggs, Lord Gower and David Webster, Safeway's incoming chairman, were among the 130 guests who sat down to a special dinner. Proof that age is no barrier — Sir Alistair flies to Edinburgh tonight for a meeting in his latest capacity as non-executive chairman of Scottish & Newcastle.

Archer target

OVER breakfast at the Hyatt Carlton Tower last week, Stephen Wenman was made an offer he couldn't refuse. Dick Cole, chairman of Charterwell Re, which owns the Archer Group, stretched across the table and asked the founder and former chairman of Special Risk Services if he had considered the role of chief executive. Before the toast was cold, Wenman was asked to take up his new post immediately. He started work at Archer the next day.

Party line

RUMOURS have been whizzing round that Sir Ernie Harrison, the chairman of Vodafone, has been handing out free mobile phones to the Tory party. This is true — well sort of. In the run-up to the election, Sir Ernie has lent a phone to Richard Benyon, the Conservative candidate in his constituency of Newbury. I am told that Benyon is paying for all his calls, but given the trouncing the Tories had last time they faced the voters of Berkshire, the man needs all the help he can get.

MORAG PRESTON

Return on the cards for ideas of Keynes, the prodigal son

Economists
are taking a
new look at the
Conservative
legacy, says
Janet Bush

It is becoming commonplace for economists to argue that the radical Conservative programme of supply side reform over the past 18 years has finally worked its magic and that the British economy can now grow faster, with lower unemployment and less inflation, than in the past.

Some take the argument even further and suggest that the transformation wrought by the Tory assault on trade union militancy, reform of welfare and taxes, deregulation and privatisation, have made the world safe for the return of that long-shunned prodigal — Keynesian demand management.

This is a breathtaking claim given the opprobrium heaped on the ideas of John Maynard Keynes since their unquestioned dominance was broken towards the end of the 1970s and it needs some qualification.

Rew are talking about the large-scale pump priming of demand through government decisions on fiscal policy that formed a key part of Keynes's thinking in the 1920s and 1930s, when the great challenges facing the world economy were depression and mass unemployment and inflation was more or less unknown. There is still a firm consensus that demand management should largely be conducted through monetary policy and that budgets should, at least over the cycle as a whole, be aimed towards balance.

There is also no decisive break in the unanimity, which continues to spread across the globe, in favour of Keynesianism, which is seen as the only way to fight inflation rather than pursuing full employment is the prime aim of macroeconomic policies. Instead, it is microeconomic or supply side policies that are touted as the main tool for trying to cut unemployment.

So it is that institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the OECD — not to mention our own Kenneth Clarke — continue to urge structural reform, as well as lower interest rates, on those continental European economies lumbered with abjectly high levels of unemployment. And, as we all know, new Labour is committed to a tough inflation target and the golden rule on public borrowing as its macroeconomic framework with a panoply of so-called active labour market measures and micro-adjustments to the tax and benefit systems designed to incentivise the workforce and lower unemployment. There is not much vintage Keynes on display here.

But although big picture Keynesianism is far from making a triumphant return, there has been a distinct shift in economic thinking in America and Britain. Even the ideol-



In the brave new world post-Margaret Thatcher, Keynesian fine-tuning is back, but will Gordon Brown respond?

ogues at the IMF appear to be part of an emerging strand of new Keynesianism.

Some, albeit rather isolated, voices are even trying to rehabilitate fine-tuning through fiscal policy as opposed to the active use of interest rates that has become established in Britain and America. In a paper this month for the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and the Economic and Social Research Council, Simon Wren-Lewis, Professor of Economics at Exeter University, argues against the current consensus that fiscal policy is ineffective in influencing demand and output.

He contends that some fiscal actions by government could be very powerful in managing demand by influencing the pattern of spending and provides model-based evidence of the effect on output of different types of fiscal stimulation. His findings are interesting in themselves, but the key point is that Professor Wren-Lewis writes on the assumption that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with using fiscal policy to determine the level of output at any given time.

By far the most important nod in the direction of Keynes is the fact that tackling unemployment is back on the economic and political agenda. On the simplest level, this is because unemployment is now perceived as a much more pressing social and economic problem than inflation which, for now, is relatively well behaved throughout the world.

But it is critically because supply side measures, and most importantly, reforms to make the labour market more flexible, are widely believed to have changed the balance between inflation and unemployment. There may still be a dom-

inant camp of those who believe, as Norman Lamont so notoriously expressed it, that unemployment is a "price worth paying" for low inflation. The difference now is that the price may have been paid.

The belief is that the Nairu (the non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment) or the "natural rate" of unemployment has dropped. In other words, Britain can have lower unemployment without igniting higher inflation. How far unemployment can fall without tightening conditions in the labour market to the extent that wages start to rise in order to attract the right kind of staff is a key question of the current economic debate and lies at the centre of current contention on

City bonuses or more widespread pressure on wages as unemployment falls.

In the brave new world of post-Thatcherism — and of course Reaganism — it is an exciting challenge for policymakers to test just how far unemployment can safely fall in this sense, Keynesian fine-tuning is certainly back.

Alan Greenspan, at the US Federal Reserve, has said as close to the inflationary wind as possible to pursue the goal of higher employment and done so with considerable success. In Britain, Mr Clarke has, by refusing to be panicked into raising interest rates by the Bank of England, tested his own belief that Conservative reforms may reduce unemployment by taking Keynesian measures simply to bring the economy back to its full growth potential.

There are still those, of course, who argue that Britain has reached its current combination of low inflation and fast-falling unemployment through the economic brutality of two deep recessions. Praise of Conservative supply side reforms has to be tempered with the observation that unemployment is still half a million higher than it was in 1979.

But Mr Brown has to answer the question whether he, as Chancellor, would be prepared to wipe that half a million off unemployment relatively swiftly by taking the demand side measures that the New Keynesian consensus is beginning to endorse.

Mr Brown's sales pitch is that Conservative policies have failed and that it is new Labour that will raise Britain's long-run growth rate, largely through improving investment in physical and intellectual capital. Most economists believe that trying to build up skills and education, in particular, is a useful aim in

‘The most important nod in the direction of Keynes is that tackling unemployment is on the agenda’

whether Britain needs higher interest rates or not.

Belief that the Nairu has fallen cuts across political lines. A private dinner of top-flight British economists with very different political sympathies recently found nobody in disagreement that Conservative supply side reforms have worked. Most people used to think that the unemployment rate could fall to 7 per cent without risking higher inflation. Many economists will now bet money on 6 or even 5 per cent. Professor Patrick Minford talks about a natural rate of 2 per cent.

For the record, it is worth noting that last week's labour market statistics showed the unemployment rate falling to 6.2 per cent in February and the annual rate of average earnings growth rising — some say ominously — to 5 per cent. It remains to be seen whether this increase largely reflects

itself but there is great scepticism that Labour will succeed in raising Britain's growth rate much further, except in the very long term.

For one thing, the Labour argument that low investment under successive Conservative governments has held back British growth does not completely hold water. Gross fixed capital formation has run at an average of 20.5 per cent of gross domestic product since 1985 and is close to that during the current recovery.

Regardless of Labour's accent on raising the growth rate through encouraging greater investment, Mr Brown seems to be missing the point that there may still be scope to reduce unemployment by taking Keynesian measures simply to bring the economy back to its full growth potential.

There are still those, of course, who argue that Britain has reached its current combination of low inflation and fast-falling unemployment through the economic brutality of two deep recessions. Praise of Conservative supply side reforms has to be tempered with the observation that unemployment is still half a million higher than it was in 1979.

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Forecast: fog persisting indefinitely

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again" is not a bad rule for schoolchildren who get the answer wrong first go; they have been taught the rules, so they simply have to apply them. For grown-up forecasters and analysts, however, the world is not so simple. They apply the rules they have learnt, but they get the wrong answer. Did they miscalculate, or are the rules themselves wrong? This question is pressing because forecasts seem to go from bad to worse; yet few of those who mislead us so confidently seem willing to consider revising the rules.

Look through the reports from lagging investment managers (notably those who preach value investing) or from the economists who have been crying "wolf" about inflation for so long, and you will find something very like obstinacy. "We got it wrong last time," they admit, "but it will be different next time." Or the time after. Not the forecast, that is to say, but the outcome. Our copybook rules are bound to work in the end.

Why do these people, from the Bank of England down, cling to strategies or models that are clearly faulty, and doing such damage to their reputations? Partly pride but partly economic pressure. Strategies and models cost. Value investment relies on a huge effort in company analysis. An economic model, which can rival the complexity of a weather forecasting system, is even worse. So fine tune, by all means, check all the inputs (remember: garbage in, garbage out), but back to the drawing board! Not if we can help it and anyway, who would pay for all the new software?

An honourable exception at first sight is Oxford Economic Forecasting, whose warning of policy dilemmas for the next government was making so much weekend news. Most of their assessment section is an attempt to work out the consequences of the recent huge rise in sterling — an event which, they admit, took them, like most others, completely by surprise. They are bold enough to question the consensus view that with sterling so strong, inflation must fall;

after all, inflation failed to rise when sterling was weak, so the link must be less direct than it looks. Full marks, too, for clear language: I have seldom read an economic discussion in such limpid prose. No bafflegab at all.

But what are they saying? They do start one possible hare the effect of exchange rate change on prices depends not just on the numbers, but on what caused any change. But since this change took them by surprise, they do not presumably know what caused it; so they might just say: "This needs further research", and move on. But they don't. They start discussing hypothetical cases, and just what they are saying so lucidly, damned if I know, even after several readings. The rise of the pound might hold prices down, for a short or perhaps a longer time, or not; or it might even push them up. There: that must cover all the exits.

It ought surely be possible to do better than this. For a start, the rise in sterling was not a surprise to everyone. Patrick Minford of Liverpool got it broadly right. (Why was this thinker dropped as a Treasury wise man? For showing up the others?) Readers of these pages will have read again and again that tight fiscal and loose monetary policy (for example, Japan and the EMU candidates) drives exchange rates down and in case you missed the point, all these countries have announced that they wanted to devalue. So has the pound risen much at all, or are we simply on the other end of a see-saw? That looks like the main explanation.

So far as it is not, it suggests that British interest rates are too high, not too low; and that fiscal policy is still too relaxed. Awkward politically, but hardly a dilemma. The big threat to Gordon Brown's sleep is not policy, but his proposed Council of Economic Advisers. If Oxford is a fair sample of the goods on offer (and it is a bit better that fair), he will soon be lost in the fog too.

Jason Nissé looks into Saudi business strife Family feud poses wider worries

A change is blowing through the opaque world of Saudi Arabian business life. A legal battle for control of the \$4 billion Abdul Latif Jameel Group (ALJ), the international property, motor trading and consumer products giant, has exposed a structural schism and threatens the development of one of the world's richest nations.

The fight for ALJ was prompted by the death in 1993 of Sheikh Abdul Jameel, its 84-year-old founder. A low-paid government official, he started the company in 1945, distributing Western consumer goods to the newly affluent Saudis. When, ten years later, he gained the rights to sell the Toyota Land Cruiser, a four-wheel drive vehicle essential before today's modern road networks were completed in the Gulf, the company mushroomed.

It is now the UK's third largest car dealer, owning Hartwell, the Land Rover seller. It also distributes electronic goods for Toshiba and Akai in the Gulf and has widespread US property interests.

Under Sharia, Sheikh Jameel's assets were divided between his six children, the three sons, Yousef, Mohammed and Magdi each receiving 22.2 per cent of the group



Gaining rights to sell the Land Cruiser boosted ALJ

and the three daughters 11.1 per cent each.

Magdi, at 40 the youngest, was seen by many as the heir-apparent, having run the electronics business and the US operations. The eldest, Yousef, was an international playboy, well known in London clubs and casinos until 1988 when he breached a court order and kidnapped his daughter, Sara, 9. This restricted his movements as he could have been imprisoned for contempt had he entered the UK.

Now based in Jeddah, the Saudi capital, Yousef and the middle brother, Mohammed, decided to take control of the group. Magdi claims they

used a power of attorney given by Magdi in the Seventies, changing the articles of association to nullify his blocking vote in the company and transferring the jewel in its crown, the Toyota agency, to a company run by Mohammed.

Magdi and his younger sister, Nadia, are now suing to overturn this and gain their share of control of the group. An advisor to Magdi says: "This is one of the biggest companies in Saudi Arabia and it raises key questions about corporate governance. If the country wants to position itself as a modern economy with modern business practices, this sort of thing should not hap-

pen." However, it is happening all over the country, as the issue of control of the massive industrial infrastructure created by Saudi Arabia's oil boom of the last half century comes to the boil. Most of the country's businesses are owned by families, often headed by ageing patriarchs.

Sharia, which worked well when many Saudis were nomadic farmers, works less well when trying to determine the future of industrial concerns.

The ALJ fight is the largest battle to emerge, but far from the first. Not long ago the Nagui family, which owns agencies for Rothman cigarettes and BMW cars, was torn apart by a battle between the leader's two sons over control of the group. In the end one son took the business while the other was paid off with assets and cash.

Magdi Jameel admits his fight may be bad for ALJ prestige both at home and abroad. But it is also exposing the desperate need for reform in the country's commercial structures and law and may have much more wide-reaching implications than deciding who controls the company that might sell you your next Land Rover Discovery.

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Equities take heart from Wall Street

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Tibbett & Britten recovers

Tibbett & Britten, the contract logistics company, saw pre-tax profits recover to £23.8 million in 1996 from £12.1 million previously, helped by improved trading conditions in the UK. Earnings almost doubled to 35.8p a share. There is a final dividend of 12p (16.2p). Almost half the total revenue was earned outside the UK, with North America accounting for more than 75 per cent of revenue growth.

Deal agreed

Fayrewood, the Aim-listed distributor of audio equipment, has conditionally agreed to buy Banque Magnetique for £23 million (£25 million) in cash and 457,446 Fayrewood shares. A further £12 million may be payable if performance criteria is met. Fayrewood shares have been suspended at 67p due to the size of the deal.

Luminar issue

Luminar, the bar and restaurant group, is to raise £15.6 million in a one-for-three rights issue at 320p a share. The shares rose 14p to 359p after the announcement. The cash will be used to speed up the expansion of the Chicago Rock cafe theme bar and restaurant business.

Symonds fall

Shares in Symonds fell 17p to 42p after the electronic equipment group said results for the year to March 31 will not meet expectations "because of order shortfalls in the process technology and precision engineering divisions".

Capital foiled

Pre-tax profits at Capital Industries fell to £6.3 million (£6.5 million) in 1996 on turnover of £86.7 million (£89 million). The supplier of specialist packaging and foils is increasing the total dividend to 5.7p (5.2p), with a final 3p.

Logica helpline

Logica, the computer services group, will today announce a £1.5 million contract to set up an emergency helpline for customers of ScottishPower, the electricity provider. The system will be named Trouble Call.

Kingsbury lift

Kingsbury Group, the furniture retailer, lifted pre-tax profits to £4.5 million from £4.1 million in 1996. A final dividend of 2.5p lifts the total 25 per cent to 3.75p, payable from earnings of 12.6p a share (11.7p).

Pilkington profit warning shatters City expectations

By OLIVER AUGUST

A PROFITS warning from Pilkington, the glass products group, shattered City optimism ahead of the results for the year to March 31. The profit forecast was revised down from £175 million to £130 million, sending the shares to their lowest level in more than three years.

The main reason for the shortfall is the depressed construction sector in Europe and overcapacity in the glass industry, Pilkington said. Sales volumes and end-product prices were badly hit in Germany, the group's main market.

The German building sector suffered heavy losses after the post-unification construction bubble burst two years ago. A restructuring programme announced last year will be accelerated and expanded to cope with market conditions.

Divisions on the Continent face additional plant and line closures to improve efficiency. The group said: "As a result,



Rudd: setback

ongoing restructuring costs of close to £20 million per annum will be borne in the next two years, twice the level previously indicated."

A further one-off charge of £40 million is to be expected in the 1997 accounts to cover asset write-offs associated with its restructuring plans. Pilkington does not expect total net exceptional losses of more than £55 million.

Andrew Robb, finance director, said Pilkington is in talks with unions in Germany about the closure of processing and double glazing plants. He said: "In Germany there will be a significant number of job losses."

Europe is the biggest market for building material glass products. Around 80 per cent of sales are in continental Europe. Mr Robb said overcapacity in Europe had reached 10 per cent, but he believes sales will pick up in the summer.

Sir Nigel Rudd, chairman, said: "These results represent a setback. However, I have no doubt the group's underlying strategy is sound."

The strength of the pound cost the group about £10 million because of a mixture of losses in translating foreign profits into sterling and the increased attractiveness of cheaper imports. The shares closed 7½p down at 120p.

Tempus, page 30



Charles Parker, the managing director of leisure group Clubhaus, and Guy Buckley, chief operating officer, celebrate a 70 per cent rise in profits to £1.49 million. Earnings reached 3.6p a share but there is no final dividend.

Booker figures suffer over cost of buying rival

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE cost of buying Nurdin & Peacock, a direct competitor, knocked back pre-tax profits at Booker, Britain's largest cash and carry operator, from £83 million to £13 million last year.

The company also revealed yesterday that the additional volume produced by the acquisition has put the reorganisation of its distribution network six months behind schedule. The integration of the two companies is otherwise on schedule.

Profits for the year to December 28 were hit by exceptional charges of £88.9 million relating to the £264 million acquisition made in November, and to the reorganisation of Booker's food service operations.

Operating profit from continuing operations excluding exceptional charges rose 4 per cent to £122.4 million, while turnover from continuing operations increased 5 per cent to £4.44 billion.

Food wholesaling profits rose 27 per cent, including a contribution from Nurdin &

Peacock. Fish processing also grew strongly, but profits declined in the agricultural businesses and in food service, which suffered from competitive markets and pressure on margins. Difficulties are expected to continue at Holroyd Meek, the contract caterers, throughout 1997.

Charles Bowen, chief executive, said he would consider selling the prepared foods business, which is considered non-core, but he has not yet received any reasonable offers. Booker would expect to raise more than £50 million from a sale.

After exceptional charges, a loss per share of 4.7p compares to earnings of 22.8p per share a year earlier. Net debt at the end of the year was £381.9 million.

Booker shares fell 3½p to 333½p as Jonathan Taylor, chairman, gave warning that significant benefits will not be seen by shareholders until 1998. A final dividend of 15.7p (15.2p) is payable on July 1. It gives a full-year dividend of 23.8p (23.1p).

Sale boosts Singer & Friedlander

By ROBERT MILLER

SINGER & Friedlander, the City merchant bank, received a boost from the sale of its stake in Peoples Phone to lift annual pre-tax profits by 57 per cent, to £54.8 million.

Without the exceptional sale item, Singer profits in the year to December 31 rose 22 per cent, to £41.7 million. Earnings per share, excluding the sale, rose to 11.63p, from 9.96p in 1995. The final dividend, due on June 4, rises to 2.8p, from 2.4p, making 4.65p (4p).

Singer, which saw funds under management rise to £6 billion, from £3.8 billion, said that Carnegie, a Nordic stock-broker, investment banking and asset management firm, had contributed £16.1 million to profits, against £14.3 million last time. Collins Stewart, the bank's broking arm, also contributed to bottom-line profits. In corporate broking, Collins Stewart raised more than £300 million.

On insurance broking, Singer said that "in spite of all steps" taken to reduce costs in Edgar Hamilton, the business continued to decline and make losses and had therefore been sold. The loss for the part of the year in which Singer owned the broker was £300,000, and there was a capital loss on sale of £3 million. Singer shares fell 10p to close at 141p.

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هكذا عن الأصل

Annie Turner introduces a special report on the upsurge in advanced technology that will revolutionise dialling



Desert call box: Sandy Gall sends home a story amid the dunes where normal links are absent

This is Sandy Gall, reporting from the desert

The days when intrepid explorers, and even businessmen and journalists travelling in remote areas, were cut off from all contact with the civilised world have long gone.

The introduction of mobile satellite communications systems means that contact can be maintained just about everywhere in the world and the equipment is getting smaller, lighter and simpler to operate.

A satellite phone no bigger or heavier than a notebook PC has been developed and launched commercially in a joint initiative by BT and Norway's Telenor, who claim that it is the world's smallest global mobile communications system.

Called the Mobiq and weighing just 5lb, it can be used, say the makers, from virtually any land mass. They say it works even in the Himalayas, where previously cellular phones have been ineffective.

Sandy Gall, the writer and broadcaster, was equipped with a Mobiq while leading an expedition across the Oranai Desert.

"Naturally it doesn't provide quite the sound quality

you obtain with heavier equipment," he said, "but it is terribly portable and considerably cheaper."

Inmarsat satellites positioned over the equator provide the links for Mobiq. The high power of these new-generation satellites means that less power is needed on the ground, paving the way for smaller terminals and cheaper call charges.

Users dial an international number as they would if they were using a conventional land line phone.

The Mobiq delivers digitised voice, fax and data communications including e-mail and comes as a complete package of telephone and air time.

It is operated with a removable SIM card which offers security and allows users to share telephones while retaining their billing data and storing speed dial numbers on their personal cards.

The Mobiq costs £2,400 and call charges are about £1.80 per minute. There is a monthly charge of £15 which provides five minutes of free air time.

MICHAEL KNIFE

Overseas target fuels restructure

Advanced telecommunications play a significant part in the structural reform programme underway in Japan to make the country's industry highly competitive again.

At the moment, Japan lags far behind Europe and America in this field. For example, it is impossible to make a mobile telephone call from Japan to Britain.

The economic planning agency is encouraging entrepreneurship, deregulation and the development of a competitive market. Recommendations include liberalising entry into the telecommunications industry, abolishing price regulation, and working to control the monopolistic power of NTT, which supplies local and long-distance telecommunications services through a modernised and largely digital network.

NTT has been putting its efforts into rapid globalisation. Last week it was announced that it had joined BT in a venture with Singapore Technologies Telemedia to bid for Singapore's second telecommunications licence. This is a very significant move, as Singapore has one of the most highly developed telecommunications systems in Asia.

Last week it was announced that BT and Marubeni Corporation will form a joint venture in Japan to provide domestic and global communications services.

Network Information Service (NIS), in which Marubeni and BT have major shareholdings, and BT Japan will join forces on April 1. Since the deregulation of the mobile communications in-

dustry in 1994, the market in Japan for mobile phones and Personal Handyphone Systems (PHS) has burgeoned. There are 26 mobile phone services on offer from foreign and domestic companies, with some 720,000 new customers a month joining almost 20 million existing customers.

PHS has more than 1.5 million subscribers to 28 PHS services, which attract 300,000 new customers each month. Combined, this means that just over 15 per cent of Japan's population of 120 million are mobile phone owners.

Japanese culture still remains an enigma to many outsiders. NTT is beginning to deal with the lack of information by using the Internet's World Wide Web. The Japan Window opened a year ago and aims to provide information about Japan to both America and Europe.

Content is diverse and includes such topics as Japanese business, economics and financial information, science and technology information and daily news features. Japan Window is accessed more than 16,000 times a day.

The Internet address is <http://jw.ntt.com>. New sites about Japan appear each week which may be found using an online Web search engine such as Yahoo or Lycos to locate sites that include Japan in their address or heading.

A good index of Web addresses in Japan may be found on Cyberspace Japan. Internet address <http://www.csj.co.jp>

RUTH TAPLIN

International deal that gets the world connected

The gulf between telecommunications links in the developed and developing world is expected to diminish rapidly after the landmark accord reached last month at the World Trade Organisation meeting in Geneva.

Sixty-eight countries promised to open up their telecommunications markets to competition and agreed to abide by a common set of rules to ensure fair play. Statistics over the past seven years have shown that in countries where competition in telecommunications has been allowed, economies have grown faster by an average of more than 6 per cent.

Charlene Barshefsky, the acting US trade representative who negotiated on behalf of the US at the WTO talks, described the pact as being "one of the most important trade agreements for the 21st century". It will come into force on January 1, 1998, the same date as complete telecommunications liberalisation is due to begin in most European Union countries.

All basic telecommunications services are covered in the agree-

ment, including voice, data, fax and radio and satellite-based services.

Ms Barshefsky claimed that it could reduce the cost of international calls by as much as 80 per cent. In terms of market capitalisation, global telecommunications ranks behind only health care and banking as a global industry.

Yet many sub-Saharan and other underdeveloped countries have fewer than a single telephone line per 100 people. At the other end of the scale, Sweden has more mobile phones per head of population than most countries have ordinary lines.

The growth in telecommunications seems inexorable; it grew at twice the rate of the global economy in 1995.

The ITU reckons that by 1998 the telecommunications sector will be a \$1 trillion industry worldwide and that, by the turn of the century, the combined base of conventional and mobile telephones will be around one billion.

All these figures are dizzying and, at first glance, it looks as though the revolution in telecommunications is accentuating the gulf between the developed and developing world.

The US, Western Europe and Japan become ever more reliant on telephone calls, electronic mail, faxes and the Internet. In contrast, some 43 million households are on the waiting list for telephones around the world and the average waiting time is a year.

However, things could improve rapidly and radically in many developing countries, with such a number of countries promising to open up their telecommunications markets to competition. Many countries have retained their national monopolies as they are normally highly profitable.

The other main factor that will help the developing world is new technology. Installing phone lines is no longer a matter of putting

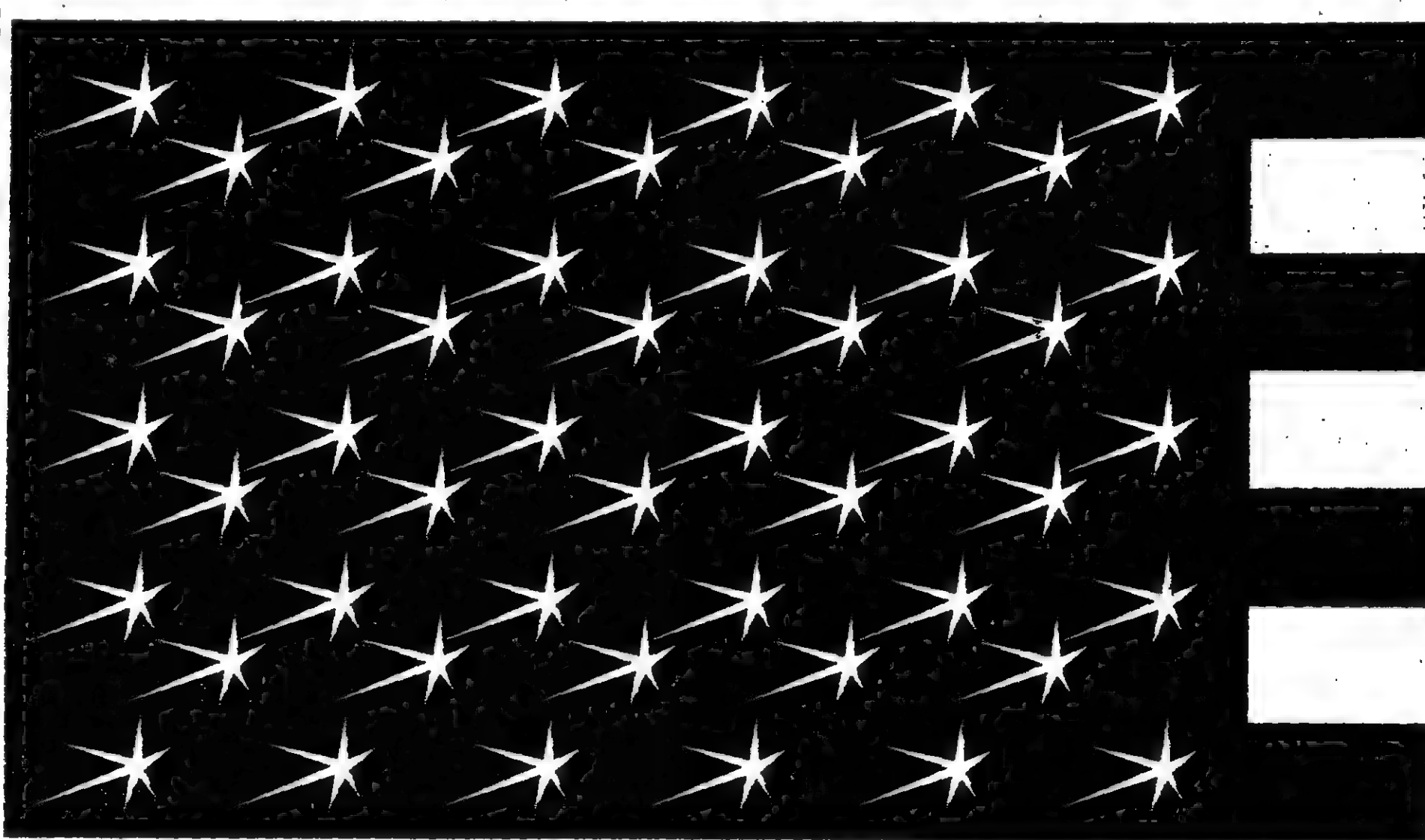
copper cable into the ground. It can be done far more quickly and cheaply by providing mobile networks or by using radio-based technology to provide "fixed" lines or by satellite.

According to Qualcomm of San Diego, California, by 2000 over 32 million "fixed" lines will be installed using radio technology which will rise to 529.8 million by 2010. In the next two years three competing constellations of satellites will be launched to provide phone, fax and data transmission services.

Needless to say, the world's telephone operators are rubbing their hands in glee at the prospect of this expected massive increase in traffic. In particular there has been an unseemly scramble by the world's largest telcos to form alliances to help them to address the needs of multinationals.

Jean-Yves Charlier, president of ITS, the global network integrator, says: "Multinationals want to cut costs and they see the best way of doing this to be through standardising their infrastructure and services."

Negotiator: Barshefsky



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Phone future is in the cards

One of the fastest growing sectors of the telecommunications market is phone cards. It has rapidly turned into a multi-million pound global industry.

There are many types of phone cards, but they have two things in common: they are simple to use and keep the cost of calls down. Now, prepaid cards predominate. They can be bought from garage forecourts to supermarkets and are in use in more than 185 countries.

But they have a significant disadvantage: they can be used only with pay phones that belong to the operator that issued the card and that are equipped to handle them.

Now, new types of cards are flooding onto the market. They work by the caller dialling an access code and the number he wants to reach. The access code automatically routes him to the card issuer's network and, after accessing a dialling tone, he can make his call.

These cards can be used with almost any phone, the only condition being that the toll free number (0800 or 0500 number in the UK) that typically is used as the access code is obtainable from the country you are in. The number 0800 has been agreed as the international standard for toll free calls, but not everywhere yet.

Another bonus of using calling cards when abroad is

Annie Turner
on how plastic credit is booming in call boxes

that you can deal with an operator who speaks your language and uses a familiar system.

Another variation is charge cards issued by your home or office service provider, so that calls made from elsewhere are simply added to your home or office phone bill or charged to your credit card. Most of the big operators issue charge cards including AT&T, BT, MCI and Sprint. They ensure that you do not pay for the use of the phone that you make the call from, but are billed at the same rate as you would have paid back at base.

This is useful in many situations, including being abroad, being able to use a friend or even a stranger's phone without it costing them, or to provide cards to children so that they have no excuse for not calling home.

Where the card is used to make calls on a telephone account, security is usually enforced with a personal identification number (PIN) for authentication before calls are

connected.

Prepaid cards are available from other operators such as Swiftcall (0171-488 2001) or First Telecom (0171-572 7700) or World Telecom (0171-384 5000) in the UK who require prepayment in return for massively discounted international calls.

Subscribers can top up the amount of airtime they have whenever they want by authorising a credit card payment to the card issuer.

In many ways, the rise of the calling card is due to greedy hotels, whose typical mark-up is 700 per cent. The hotel business is out of step with the rest of the world. The cost of calls is falling worldwide, yet hotels insist on charging a premium, provoking much resentment in their customers.

Furthermore, many business travellers turn their hotel bedrooms into mobile offices and want to be able to send and receive electronic mail and faxes, as well as pick up their voice mail and maybe access their office computer.

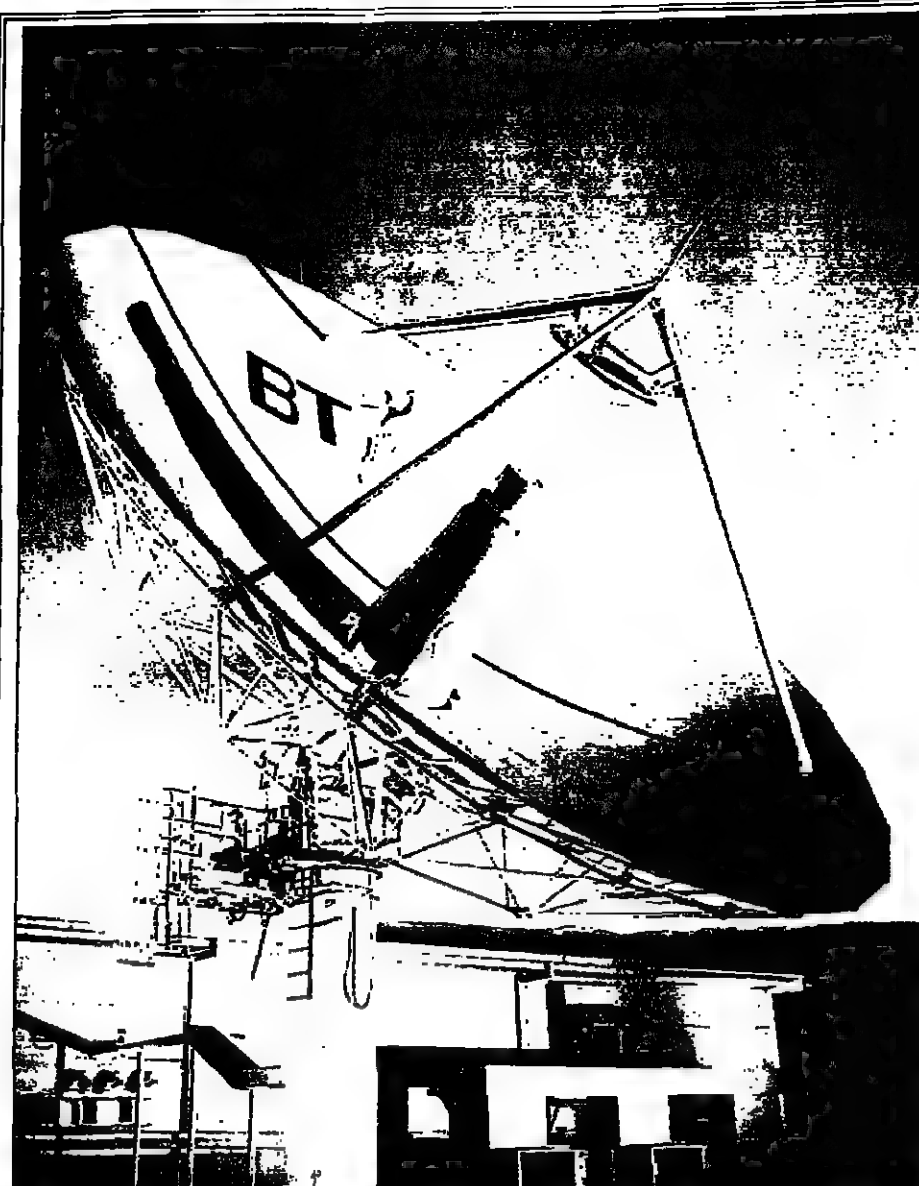
The cost is prohibitive and hotels do not seem to realise that if they dropped their prices the traffic volumes would rise.

The hotel trade's most common reaction to its guests dialling a toll free number to obtain cheaper calls is to block their access or apply a surcharge on the bill.

Mobile subscribers can cut out the hotel phone system altogether, especially as the ability to use a mobile phone abroad (roaming) is becoming more commonplace.

Although roaming is expensive, it is still cheaper than hotel bills and a mobile phone can be used in conjunction with a calling card. Matthew Fernandez, sales director with London-based card producer TCS, thinks this will prove a popular option.

He believes that many companies are realising that phone cards make a superb marketing tool, and that the next step is to put phone credits on to supermarket loyalty cards.



The BT Pacific Earth station will modernise communication links on land or sea

Uplink down under

WHEN the new £15 million Land Earth Station in Auckland goes live in May, BT is set to offer its customers a service that, apart from the polar regions, will span the whole world. *Michael Knipe writes.*

Called BT Pacific, the station will work in tandem with BT's existing land Earth stations, BT Atlantic (former Goonhilly) in the UK and BT Indian at Elk in Norway.

The station will provide the Earth link for the Inmarsat Pacific Ocean region satellite and offer a full range of communications facilities including voice, fax, telex, data and high speed data capabilities. It

EARTH STATION

will also introduce applications such as video conferencing, Internet access and e-mail.

"Customers will be able to use BT anywhere in the world on land or at sea," says Rohan Channugam, general manager of BT's aeronautical and maritime divisions.

"We are probably not the cheapest service but ours provides the best quality and customer service. A dedicated network will maintain our service."

Competitive pricing and a single billing system are

among the advantages for customers using its services worldwide at sea or on land.

BT's New Zealand partner, telecommunications provider Clear, has assisted by providing the national and international links to the BT global voice and data networks. BT's communications systems for maritime and land mobile use include Inmarsat-A, B-Sat, M-Sat, C-Sat and Mobit.

Another recent development by BT saw the introduction of B-Sat High with Airtime Speed Data (HSD), an extension of the B-Sat service. It enables interconnection with the land-based Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN).

Gallic system on alert for flotation

France Telecom, the telecommunications monopoly owned by the French Government, will be partially privatised in May in what is expected to be the largest corporate stock offering in French history. *Joel Stratie-McClure writes.*

The announcement in Paris last week concerning the company's financial future will boost the liberalisation of the domestic telecommunications market. It also cements the French approach to the European Union-mandated open telecommunications market on January 1, 1998.

The public flotation of the company, which has been valued by financial experts at between Fr100-200 billion (£11-22 billion) is expected to generate between Fr30-80 billion (£3.5-10 billion).

The French Government will keep 51 per cent of the shares to "keep it a model of a public sector service", as one minister said. One survey indi-

cates that 77 per cent of all Frenchmen will be interested in buying shares when selling starts on May 27 and the stock is listed on the Paris and New York markets on June 9.

Michel Bon, 52, president, is a former banker and retailer who took over the reins of France Telecom in 1995. He says: "We want the greatest number of shareholders possible."

M Bon, who is credited with taming French unions, cutting telecommunications rates, and improving overall telephone and data services — also announced financial results last week. Last year, the world's fifth largest telecommunications carrier had revenues of Fr151.3 billion (£17.25 billion), up 2.4 per cent on 1995's Fr147.8 billion (£16.8 billion), and earnings of Fr2.1

billion (£240 million), versus Fr9.2 billion (£1 billion). The decline in earnings reflected charges relating to the privatisation.

The privatisation of France Telecom, which became a legal corporation on January 1, in accordance with the July 1996 Telecommunications Act, has been a key aspect of President Jacques Chirac's economic policy. The timing of the offering had been delayed until France Telecom became more competitively structured.

A few years ago the French telecommunications market was seen as less open than other European countries when it came to foreign competition. In addition, thousands of workers went on strike in 1993 to protest a change in France Telecom's state-monopoly status.

To establish a niche as a global operator France Telecom has, among its international activities, formed Global One with Deutsche

Telecom AG and Sprint Corp, the American long distance operator. That venture had sales of over \$500 million (£509 million) last year.

Although France Telecom is now considered the only operator in France with significant market power, a number of French and foreign players are entering the fray. Such competition raises questions about the outlook for the soon-to-be-privatised former monopoly.

"France has an image as a high-tech leader in telecommunications and France Telecom was relatively entrepreneurial for a state company," comments Mel Horwich, formerly a professor at the Theses Institute, a graduate school subsidised by France Telecom. "But will they remain innovative in the private sector?"



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Rome gets green light at last

ITALY has been accused of dragging its feet in implementing EU directives on the liberalisation of its telecommunications market. *John Phillips writes.*

But the Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, and Antonio Maccanico, the Minister for Posts and Telecommunications, have brought the country largely into line with EU requirements as managers at Stet, the state-run telecommunications giant, prepare for privatisation.

Stet's flagship, Telecom Italia, has been a remarkable success story compared to the bleak record of many other big public concerns in Italy.

Signor Prodi and his Treasury Minister, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, are keen to begin privatisation of Stet by the autumn to bring in much-needed revenue.

Signor Prodi appears well on the way to overcoming political objections to privatisation that have been raised

by both the National Alliance and the Marxist Communist Refoundation parties.

Signor Maccanico sees liberalisation of the market as essential to show potential private investors that Telecom Italia and the other Stet companies can function in a competitive market. A government decree that takes effect this month covers at least three EU directives linked to liberalisation, bringing Italy largely into line with Brussels' requirements.

A further directive concerning satellite down links has to be approved by the Rome Parliament.

Telecom Italia's net income was up by 53 per cent last year, compared with 1995, an increase of 21.4 per cent. Sales of new services were 1,256 billion lire (£472 million) last year, up 78 per cent on 1995. Telecom Italia's sophisticated

domestic and international network is designed to carry out massive traffic flows and provide a wide spectrum of innovative services.

Since Telecom Italia was established in 1994 it has opened 22 offices overseas. Through its subsidiary TeleMedia International it is active in Latin American markets, especially Chile, Bolivia, Argentina and Peru, offering multinational business customers high-quality data transmission, outsourcing and messaging services.

The company is also active in the new Eastern European economies and in the Middle East.

Stet's mobile telephone subsidiary TIM has become a European market leader in the sale of its innovative prepaid rechargeable telephone card for inserting in GSM handsets, the TIM card.

The card comes equipped with a microchip containing all the clients' data, the assigned telephone number and two security cards. The card has no fixed costs, abolishing monthly fees and telephone bills.

Signor Maccanico reiterated on Monday that the Government still plans to hold a special competition for the allocation of the third mobile telephone production licence in Italy, following those issued to TIM and Omnitel.

A consortium called PCN that hopes to obtain the new cellular licence includes British Telecom, Albacom, the Banca Nazionale di Lavoro and Mediaset, part of the empire of the media mogul Silvio Berlusconi.

An American company, GTE, last week withdrew its interest in the consortium, blaming what it saw as the slow pace of liberalisation of the telecommunications market in Italy.

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- ☐ European Network & Service Management 1997
2, 3, 4 June 1997, Amsterdam, Netherlands
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4, 5, 6 June 1997, London, UK
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THE WORLD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Red tape holds back Chinese development

Ruth Taplin examines how Western firms are reluctant to invest when long term profits are not guaranteed

I can cost £17 per page to send a fax from China and telephone calls are as much as £1.57 a minute, because mainland China's telecommunications are still in their development stage and have been hampered by bureaucracy.

There is also a lack of understanding by the Government that Western companies need to be confident of making long-term profits before they will invest.

China is burdened by an enormous population and wide disparities in wealth between the wealthy east coast and poor country areas.

However, there are signs that changes are occurring slowly. The reintegration of Hong Kong may have a great impact as telecommunications links between China and Hong Kong are plentiful.

China's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT) regulates all issues concerned with telecommunications. Above the MPT are the policy making body and the legislative body, respectively the State Council and the People's Congress. In wireless communication and large scale projects, the State Regulatory Committee and the State Planning

Commission are also involved in key decision making.

Although China Unicom was launched in 1994, and recently began cellular services, the MPT has impeded its progress by regulating prices to such low levels that it is difficult for Unicom to expand. Driving the level of return down has also deterred foreign investment and stifled competition.

China has further stated that it will not open its telecommunications market fully to foreign companies because of the immaturity of its market, which may delay its entry into the World Trade Organisation.

The country does not allow foreign companies to operate telecoms networks in its domestic market, but has allowed them to sell equipment in China if the foreign firms manufacture locally and transfer technology.

Yet, China will allow Hong Kong to continue operating its own telecommunications network after the takeover in July. Hong Kong and southern China have the most frequently used telecoms networks in the world.

This is exemplified by the extent of illegal mobile phone use from



The face of new China: telecommunications are becoming more accessible to a backward population as the economy there develops

neighbouring Guangdong province, which is seriously disrupting air traffic control in Hong Kong.

This year, mobile phone subscribers will exceed ten million and they will reach twenty million by the year 2000. The Beijing Telecommunications Administration re-

cently signed an agreement for a "One-Stop-Shop" service offered by Telstra and another carrier which provides a high-speed service within and across national borders and with a single source of ordering, billing, fault-reporting and customer support.

China's first large-scale Internet communication network went on line last December. The Japanese company NEC, in co-operation with the Sino Information Centre, provided the host computer and all the software, valued at one billion yen. There are expected to be 20,000

users by the end of this year, and 80,000 by 2000.

The village telegraph office, which has hardly changed since the 19th century, will not change immediately.

State planners have said that prolonged and sustained invest-

ment is needed in these impoverished sectors.

In urban areas, the telegraph system has been rapidly replaced by mobile and fixed telephones and fax machines. Perhaps the most surprising development has been the agreement recently signed between China and Taiwan, allowing an underwater cable to be built, across the Taiwan Strait linking the rival countries.

Facsimile machines are expected to soar to ten million owners by the year 2000 from only 900,000 last year. There are 20 fax machine manufacturers in China and most of them assemble imported parts. Domestic production can only keep up with a fraction of demand.

Companies from all over the world are active in China. Japan's NTT has established its first joint venture in China with Shanghai NTT Communications Engineering, which will direct and train in matters related to the management and operation of the cellular telephone industry.

Ericsson has signed an expansion contract with the Shandong PTA. The \$30.7 million (£19.5 million) contract will expand the Shandong network to a total capacity of 500,000 subscribers.

Potential is still vast. The Chinese Government has plans to expand its telephone capacity to 70 million by the year 2000.

Big players hit downturn after deregulation

THE UNITED STATES

I probably seemed like a good idea at the time — to funnel almost \$5 million (£3.2 million) into the campaign war chests of strategically placed Congressmen and Senators while they were crafting a massive Bill aimed at deregulating the American telecommunications industry.

But now, more than a year after the Bill became law, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company must be having second thoughts. While its competitors are doing well under the new rules, AT&T is facing declining profits and share values.

Though it was the largest single contributor, AT&T was outbid collectively by the local telephone companies in the quest for Congressional favours. These gave more than \$10 million (£6.3 million) to politicians in the five years leading up to the passage of the Bill and it is they who have reaped the rewards.

In theory, the Telecommunications Bill set out to create a level playing field. Long distance telephone companies would be permitted to compete in local markets, while the seven Baby Bells and GTE would be able to gain access to the long distance and international networks. The bill also sought to promote competition among cable television companies, and raised the limit on the number of radio and television stations that broadcast companies could own.

In practice, however, local loyalties have made it hard for AT&T to penetrate the Baby Bell markets, while price wars with MCI, Sprint, and a swarm of upstart small long-distance providers have nibbled

away at its main business. Meanwhile, other American companies are looking overseas for dividends, seeing opportunities in forthcoming European deregulation. Nynex and Vtel have both been expanding rapidly, and have now joined with British Telecom, MCI and others as signatories to the Fiberoptic Link Around the Globe (FLAG) agreement, which will connect three continents and 12 countries.

Mergers and acquisitions in the American industry are abounding, with the \$30 billion (£24 billion) deal between BT and MCI representing the tip of the iceberg as companies consolidate their positions.

The Holy Grail to which many are steering is the provision of "one-stop shopping" for the consumer, embracing the provision of television, telephone, and computer data services from one source.

The technology now exists which will make this possible, and the Telecommunications Bill has stripped away most legal obstacles.

Yet for all the frenzied activity on the stock exchange, the American telecommunications revolution seems to have had little impact on the consumer.

It may be ten years or more, say the experts, before there is any good news for the man in the street.

This comes as no surprise to the average American. It was, after all, the corporations and not the consumers who paid their political dues to Congress. Except, as AT&T discovered, there is such a thing as Murphy's Law — what can go wrong, will.

BILL NORRIS

Looking ahead to open market

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA could find itself dealing with two massive telecommunication stock market flotations this year as both of the country's telephone carriers seek a listing on the Australian stock exchange. Rachel Bridge writes.

First is likely to be the partial privatisation of Telstra, formerly Australia Telecom, which the Government hopes will raise at least A\$8 billion (£3.8 billion). Despite fierce opposition in the Federal Parliament, the Government narrowly succeeded in getting approval for the sale and is hoping to sell off a third of the group.

The country's second carrier Optus, in which Cable & Wireless and BellSouth Corporation each have a 24.5 per cent share, is also hoping to make its stock market debut this year provided it is able to resolve litigation over its pay-TV arm, Optus Vision, in time. Analysts say that up to

51 per cent of the company, including a 25 per cent stake currently held by local industrial group Mayne Nickless, may be floated, raising upwards of A\$2 billion (£952 million).

The two public listings coincide with a year of upheaval for the Australian industry, which is set to be completely deregulated from July 1.

The Government took the first step towards deregulating the market in 1991, when it allowed Optus to begin offering long distance calls in competition with Telstra and enabled the UK's Vodafone to become the country's third mobile phone operator.

This time, however, the entire market, worth A\$20 billion (£9.5 billion), will be opened up to outside competitors.

Communications Minister Richard Alston is hoping that competition will translate into lower bills for consumers.



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THEATRE 1

Hurlyburly, a wild portrait of sleazy-smart California, impresses in (and out of) the Old Vic

THEATRE 2

Vivid dialogue but little coherence in Black Mime Theatre's *Mourning Song*

THE TIMES ARTS

THEATRE 3

Broadway may be musical-led, but serious plays are flourishing on New York's smaller stages

TOMORROW

The Bard gets updated: read Geoff Brown on *Romeo and Juliet* and the other new films

THEATRE: David Rabe's fine play defies a bomb scare. Plus energetic confusion and a short but sweet revival

Out of the jungle into the park

Was the curse of Macbeth responsible? After all, David Rabe says in a wild, woolly programme-note that he took the title of his wonderfully wild if sometimes woolly portrait of the Californian drink, drug and divorce set from Shakespeare's most chilling opening scene. One which tells the others she will meet them "when the hurlyburly's done, when the bawls are lost and won", adding that the rendezvous will be "the heath". Well, a bomb-scare meant that the audience ended up banished from the Old Vic and gathered round a bench and a tree opposite the theatre. *Hurlyburly* was finally done, not on a heath, but in a tiny, grotty park normally occupied by vines.

Hurlyburly Old Vic

Rabe's best-known plays — *Sticks and Bones*, *Streamers*, *The Basic Training of Paolo Hummel* — involve the human disasters caused by Vietnam. *Hurlyburly* is different, yet not wholly different. Its portrait of sleazy-smart California leaves you feeling you have been parachuted into a subtropical war zone variously populated by the lost, frightened, callous, angry, vicious and repulsive. Its people are members of the movie subculture, and usually high on something, whether it is coke, booze, sex, psychobabble, narcissism, misogyny or paranoia. They inhabit the Hollywood jungle, and the Hollywood jungle inhabits them.

In so far as there is a plot, it involves Graves's Eddie, a casting director, and Andy Serkis's Phil, the troubled ex-con he tantalises with promises of movie roles. It is hard to believe that two such different men would share the time of day, let alone long chairs and, it seems, the odd woman; but maybe that is Rabe's point. Eddie is adrift in the Californian shallows and threw away his

moral compass ages ago. It amuses and vaguely reassures him to collect people: the runaway girl a chum brings home as a sexual "care package"; the tart he watched performing fellatio on a film star in front of her child; Phil, behind whose tattoos seethes a murderous temper.

Does Rabe convince us that somewhere inside Eddie is a serious man appalled by the neutron bomb, political corruption and the frivolity of TV and film? Not really. But he has written a role that the excellent Graves invests with a nice mix of scorn, ennu and fastidious self-absorption. Indeed, Wilson Milam's cast is as strong as I recall Walken, Keitel, Ivey, Weaver and William Hurt being in 1984. Serkis brilliantly catches Phil's baffled violence: Stephen Dillane and Daniel Craig bring Eddie's friends to strutting, sneering life; and, though the men's roles are bigger and better than the women's, Elizabeth McGovern finds emotional need as well as brittleness in his girlfriend. They all deserved the standing ovation they received in that funny little park. They had served the play and the theatrical gods well.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Casting director Eddie (Rupert Graves) brandishes the bottle at Andy Serkis's Phil and Susanah Doyle's Bonnie in *Hurlyburly*

Much ado about not much

LONDON FRINGE

tongues. The third story tells of a Vietnamese boat-person who becomes a cleaner in the West and dies. But her experience on the boat is muddled and too little is made of her life in exile.

Neither did I extract much information about preparing oneself for death, nor even what to do when a son, partner or mother dies. Sometimes the five move or sing in unison, sometimes not. Sometimes the contrast between those who are moving and those who remain tensely motionless creates a fine tableau. At other times the contrasts create a fine nothing in particular. So much energy, dense but undetermined.

At the Orange Tree Room, *The Outside* is short (barely half an hour) and can be

simply summarised. But Susan Glaspell's style of writing leaves a sense that just around the corners of what she reveals lie untold mighty dramas. If she had so wished, you feel, she could have built the story of the drowned sailor, or the silent maid, or the misogynist New Yorker, into the sort of slow-beating, heart-churning play that was to bring fame to Eugene O'Neill.

In 1917, when this play was written, she and O'Neill were organising the Provincetown Players on Cape Cod. The programme prints a map of the area, and even if this is not strictly necessary, it is interesting to see how the northern extremity of the cape bends like an arm to protect the little town. This is how Allie Mayo, the taciturn maid, describes it,

but the sand dunes that bar the ocean are themselves a threat. Woods hold the moving hills from burying Provincetown but pour Mrs Patrick finds a grim satisfaction in watching the sands slipping down over the trees.

Here is a landscape ripe for use as symbol, where even the man-made features are put to use: Mrs Patrick's new home was once a life-saving station but is now disused. She wishes to cut herself off from something painful but is eventually told that this is cutting her off from life.

Glaspell's dramatic method here is strikingly different from the umpler style of her slightly later *Inheritors*, still playing in the Orange Tree's main house across the road. The first characters to appear are three sea-farers. I cannot identify them more clearly: former sailors, perhaps, fish-

ermen, life-savers. Paul Williamson's Captain occupies almost half the play trying to resuscitate a drowned man in front of us, but this seemingly indirect entry into the past of Jan Carey's Mrs Patrick and her maid in fact takes us boldly to the very heart of it.

In a short play an author cannot afford to hang around, but it is a mark of Martin Wyld's straightforward direction, and especially the quality of Anna Kirke's performance as the stricken Allie, that her line, "That boy — there — his face — uncovered something," sends a shiver of excitement up the spine. We learn only a little about them: but the sense of lives stretching out beyond the play is strong. There is a Portuguese sailor who might be here just to make a sign of the cross over the body. I kept thinking of the stories of Katharine Mansfield, with the sense they give of being fragments of life, brightly, briefly illumined.

JEREMY KINGSTON



Death and the maidens: Tracy Bickley and Mai Yu in Black Mime Theatre's all-female *Mourning Song*

PLENTY of energy has gone into *Mourning Song* (Cochrane), and plenty of thought, but... The thought has been directed towards indicating and linking various experiences of distress, mostly to do with death and suffered by women, and the energy of the five female performers of Black Mime Theatre is displayed for all to see. And yet.

The links are not strong; that is to say, the cast switch rapidly from playground bullies to London tarts to grieving mothers to office cleaners, but no great gain is derived from this expertise. In truth, much confusion comes of it: what are the tarts doing here, for instance? And though the programme insists that one of the three stories presents a racist killing, no indication of this appears on the stage.

This is a pity because when the devised texts — coordinated and directed by Denise Wong — concentrate on one story for more than half a minute, there are vivid and effective incidents. Dar-

ren, the over-mothered and bullied schoolboy, nerves himself to step into a bath (represented by his mother's arms) and lowers his head below the water surface. This is calmly, simply, sorrowfully shown. Two staves serve as a coffin; the pallbearers turn through a right angle, lower the staves and are immediately standing at a graveside.

Lisa Vandy's design gives us a shallow semicircle of upright canes, which leaves a decently spacious area for the company to roll and jump and tumble. But above these hangs a cluster of screens, assorted in shape and fracturing the images projected on them. Look at us, they seem to say, aren't we awful?

The company wear baggy jeans bulging with knee pads under purple sweaters bulging with elbow pads. They grin, fight and talk in other

Race, slaves and the mercy of quality

WHILE New York waits for a slew of musicals to open in April, serious drama is percolating at small houses. Downtown at the New York Theatre Workshop, David Rabe's *A Question of Mercy* looks at assisted suicide, while midtown at the American Place Theatre, Jonathan Reynolds satirises liberalism in *Stone-wall Jackson's House*.

The latter, produced on a shoestring and directed by Jamie Richards, is long overdue and wickedly funny. Henry S. Dunn has designed a panned highway billboard whose segments revolve to show painted interior rooms, as a black decent (Lisa Louise Longford) leads two white couples on a tour of the Confederate general's Virginia home. "Terrible thing, slavery," Ron Faber's caggy-faced Barney solemnly intones. "We're from Ohio, so we know." Beguiled by Barney's idyllic description of his farm, the decent suddenly asks, "Can I be your slave?" Then the second couple, from Alabama, decide they want to be his slaves, too. *Breunt omnes*.

The scene turns out to be THE MOVIE pitch, at least since Robert Altman deployed it with such satirical precision in *The Player*, approaching the status of an independent literary genre. In Donal O'Kelly's *Catalpa*, the pitch, that one-shot attempt to reach inside the heads of those with the power to get a film made, attains new heights, as a bedsit-bound cineaste fies through his dream movie in a marathon of dazzling theatrical storytelling.

O'Kelly, best known for his part in the film version of Roddy Doyle's *The Van*, stars in a piece (which he also wrote) as Matthew Kid, the black sheep of an Irish family. Too unruly for the professions, too haughty to brown-nose the Hollywood types, he seems to have blown his chance to have his movie "greenlighted" and has returned home disconsolate.

NEW YORK THEATRE

from an imagined production of a play under consideration by a regional theatre. Dunn's panels open to show a rehearsal room where a debate rages. Racism is only one of the charges. "It's mean-spirited," declares Mimi Bensing's bony, bleached-blond Gabriella, the co-artistic director. Her marshmallowy husband Oz (Faber) sees some merit: "The play is about the need for a welfare state."

When Longford's eloquent dramaturge Tracy reveals that she is the author, and not R. E. Rodgers's bullish "playwright", who has been looting around the room countering their barrage, the lefties are shocked. Tracy argues forcefully but in vain against their paternalism and sacred cows. One may laugh helplessly at the colour and gender-blind revision ultimately forced on her, with Rodgers in drag declaring that "Mrs Beethoven secretly re-routed the Seventh Symphony while Ludwig was away celebrating Kwanzaa."

Dazzling pitch for a whale of a movie

IRISH THEATRE

This little bit of exposition is put across with breathtaking speed in the play's opening moments. This leaves the remaining two hours or so to O'Kelly's cinemascopic telling of the story of the *Catalpa*, a whaling ship secretly re-routed to Western Australia by Irish-American activists to rescue six 19th-century Irish freedom fighters incarcerated there.

The story certainly has epic scope —



Life class: *A Question of Mercy* ponders assisted suicide

But there is nothing funny about the way Tracy's liberal mentors keep her on their leash.

A Question of Mercy is based on an essay, and although the tide hints at the author's bias, Rabe offers a complex portrait. Zach Grenier's stolid Dr Robert Chapman is approached by an acquaintance, Stephen Spin-

ella's deferential Thomas Ames, with a desperate plea. Thomas's lover Anthony is suffering with AIDS. They want the doctor to "intervene". Specifically, Anthony asks Chapman to coach him on how to take some contraband pills. Faced with Juan Carlos Hernandez's charm and politesse as Anthony, any doctor might overcome his phys-

dian's "consoling formality" and regard himself as "an instrument, like a forceps or a scalpel". Chapman even agrees to administer an injection if Anthony fails.

Despite a script peppered with monologues and phone calls but little action, Douglas Hughes's production gathers momentum and fascinates. The principals, who include Veane Cox as a friend of the gay men, sip tea in front of an immense, red, Rothko-like painting as they discuss AIDS and autopsies. The tension builds like a crime thriller in which you root for the victim's death. These are civilised people, Rabe suggests.

There are a few problems. A comic doctor grows tedious, and Cox's friend has the warmth of a prison matron. But Spinella brings out the poignancy in a character who is irritatingly freiful. And Hernandez, seated next to a slide projector clicking away pictures of Anthony's life, makes the suicide attempt harrowing. Death, it turns out, is not for the civilised.

EDWARD KARAM

get-busting helicopter shot, or a whale and her calf exploding from the ocean's depths. A curtain billows into the sail of a whaling ship, and O'Kelly begins a series of changes that see him acting and sounding like every actor and gadget that a 19th-century sailor might meet.

The drama is punctuated by references to the shot to be employed, but while acknowledging the powerful language of cinema, O'Kelly and the director, Bairbre Ni Chaoimh, coyly stage something to rival any special effects Hollywood could offer. The contrast between megabuck industrial light and magic and this single actor's ability to conjure whole oceans from a sheet and a pillow is never overstated, but never less than glaring.

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CYMBELINE
by William Shakespeare
Directed by William Shakespeare

THE SPANISH TRAGEDY
by Thomas Kyd
Directed by Thomas Kyd

CAMINO REAL
by Francisco de Rojas Zurrada
Directed by Francisco de Rojas Zurrada

LITTLE EYOLF
by Henrik Ibsen
Directed by Henrik Ibsen

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JAZZ 1

Justice for Billy Strayhorn: high time that Duke Ellington's collaborator is given his due

JAZZ 2

Fats Waller is only moderately well served by a new touring show of his songs

THE TIMES
ARTS

POP

Sex appeal, of the teenybop variety, is the main plus for 3T, the new Jackson family group

REVEAL THE STAR

At 23, Justin Meissner is being paid to do what he enjoys most — dance with the Royal Ballet

Power behind Duke's throne

JAZZ: Clive Davis on the elusive life of Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington's pianist and a fine composer in his own right

Everyone knows that *Take The A-Train* is a Duke Ellington tune, just as *Take Five* is Dave Brubeck's. Well, no. *Take Five*, that most mis-attributed of all modern jazz themes, was actually written by Brubeck's saxophonist, Paul Desmond. Similarly, *Take The A-Train* was the work of one of the most interesting but least familiar of jazz composers, Billy Strayhorn — a pianist who spent most of his career in the all-consuming shadow of his friend and employer, Edward Kennedy Ellington.

Strayhorn died of cancer in 1967, aged only 32. In the three decades since then the most evocative of his melodies — *Chelsea Bridge*, *Blood Count*, *Infatuation* — have become as respected a part of the canon as his mentor's own pieces. His magical ballad *Lush Life*, popularised by Nat King Cole, is a sliver of we all hours melancholia worthy of Cole Porter.

The last five years have seen the emergence of what amounts to a cottage industry, producing a flurry of recorded tributes by artists as diverse as his confidante Lena Horne and the saxophonist Joe Henderson. Yet, considering his role at the centre of the pre-eminent jazz orchestra, he has remained a stubbornly elusive presence.

His anonymity owed something to Ellington's acquisitive personality. Though the bandleader once described him as "my right arm, my left arm, all the eyes in the back of my head", Ellington (like many a bandleader) was not always scrupulous in acknowledging his collaborators' contributions. But Strayhorn's anonymity also seems to have been the protective camouflage of a homosexual and café-society on vivier who preferred life away from the public gaze.

With the arrival of David Hajdu's biography, *Lush Life* (Granta, £16.99), many of the gaps are at last being filled. An editor on the American magazine *Entertainment Weekly*, Hajdu has done a prodigious job in tracking down his subject's friends, acquaintances and colleagues. If the musical analysis is under-developed (it would have been interesting, for instance, to have learnt much more about Strayhorn's techniques and his voracious interest in classical forms), Hajdu has delivered an absorbing and well-rounded human portrait.

John Lewis, pianist with the ever-popular, quasi-baroque Modern Jazz Quartet, recalls his first impression on hearing a Strayhorn ar-

rangement: "It sounded as if Stravinsky were a jazz musician." Ravel and Debussy were a more explicit influence on Strayhorn, whose formal training acted as a counterweight to the intuitive genius of the self-taught Ellington.

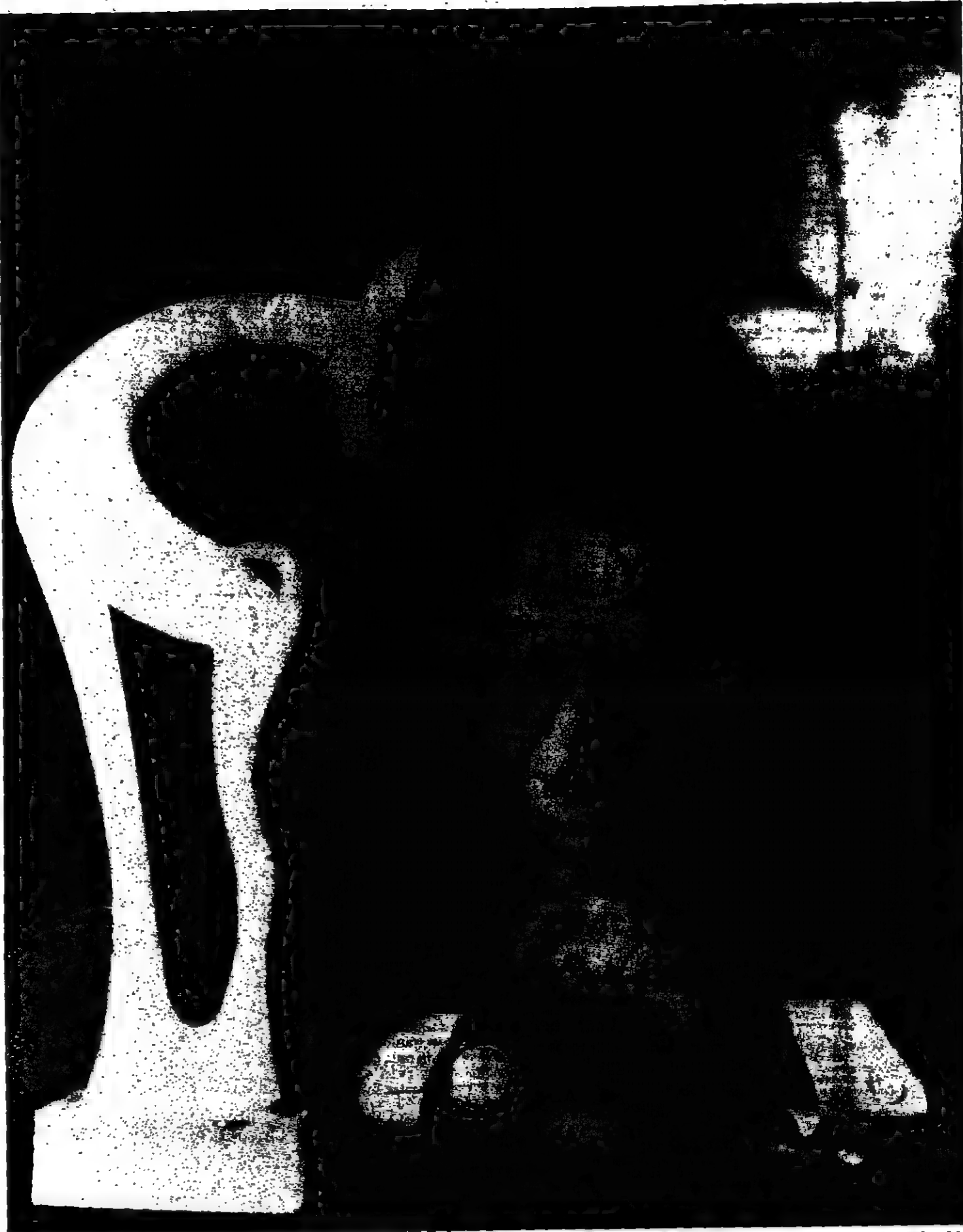
While the latter occupied himself with the gruelling business of writing and keeping an unusually creative big band on the road between studio engagements, Strayhorn — a much less driven individual — acted as his cultural antennae, reading the books that the older man never had the leisure or inclination to read, listening to the composers that he had no time to listen to.

Hajdu sensitively sketches the pressures arising from the conflict between creative independence and material comfort, between Strayhorn's relative indolence and Ellington's boundless energy. The very fact that Strayhorn belonged to both a racial and sexual minority must have contributed to the drinking that undermined his health.

In striving to win approval from the "serious" music establishment, jazz fans sometimes turn their heroes into plaster saints, incapable of sounding a sour note or writing a dull tune. The most engaging of Ellington's recent biographers, James Lincoln Collier, went against the grain by speculating that, for all his unarguable talents, Strayhorn's penchant for luxuriant textures may have undermined the "masculine leanness" of Ellington's best work: *Take The A-Train*, after all, was not a typical Strayhorn piece.

It is a question that Hajdu does not explore. Nor does he linger over the question of whether *Such Sweet Thunder* and the other suites that accounted for so much of the orchestra's output in the postwar years were a match for the earlier miniatures.

Whether Strayhorn would have flourished away from Ellington's influence is impossible to answer. The rare 1961 solo album, *The Peaceful Side of Billy Strayhorn* — recently reissued on Capitol — showcases some of his most memorable themes, including *Passion Flower* and *Something To Live For*, but the project is marred by lightweight piano playing and an horrendously schmalzy choral accompaniment on *Lush Life*. The Duke's men were never quite the same away from his court: Strayhorn was probably no exception.



Billy Strayhorn, a homosexual and café-society bon vivant who preferred life away from the public gaze, and died from cancer in 1967

Orders from the top brass

IF EVER there was a musician at the height of his powers, it is American saxophonist Joe Lovano. Long queues outside, and a standing-room-only crowd inside Ronnie Scott's gave some indication of the reputation he has built over the past decade, but it was the quality of the attention focused on him once he stepped on the stage — a fierce expectation, an almost palpable determination to savour every note he played — that marked the occasion as something special. Previous Lovano visits have seen him contributing his cultured, smoky tenor either to the punchy, rock-tinged jazz of guitarist John Scofield or to the subtle interweaving improvisations of drummer Paul

Joe Lovano
Ronnie Scott's

Motian's trio alongside the flickering guitar of Bill Frisell, but for this residency he placed himself firmly in the spotlight by fronting a local rhythm section: pianist Jonathan Gee, bassist Steve Roe and drummer Winston Clifford.

His choice of material, too, demonstrated his determination to leave his individual mark on the proceedings. Given that he was fronting an unfamiliar band, and that his latest album is a selection of Sinatra standards, he might have been forgiven for concentrating on the likes of *Chicago* and *I'm a Fool to Want You* all evening. In the event, he began with a tricky original, *Topsy Turvy*, and followed it with another, *Birds of Springtime* Gone By.

Lovano's Sinatra project was touched on with an almost reverent version of Jimmy Van Heusen's ballad, *Imagination*, but by then his audience was clearly mesmerised by his unique tonal qualities rather than by his set list.

Few saxophonists bring such a variety of textures to their playing. Lovano will state a slow theme with an affectingly breathy, singing purity, then proceed to explore its possibilities by utilising everything from fruity warbles and bleary honks to rasping high-note keening, all unaffectedly woven into an intensely melodic improvisation. He is also supremely adaptable, bringing an appropriately quirky, dignified bluesiness to a Monk tune one minute, then swooning rapturously through Mingus's achingly beautiful *Duke Ellington's Sound of Love* the next.

Lovano is, in short, the complete saxophonist, and the long, warm ovation he received at the conclusion of his set (a compliment generally restricted at this club to Betty Carter) was richly deserved.

CHRIS PARKER

Footsteps of the fat man

Fabulous Fats
Stables, Wavendon

Smith's quintet, which satisfyingly recreated much of the repertoire of the Rhythm. Clarinetist Trevor Whiting, who played as a teenage prodigy in the trio of Waller's exact contemporary, pianist Art Hodes, brought just the right Creole inflec-

tions into the band. Smith's bur-nished lead trumpet, occasionally flurrying into the high register, evoked the timing and tone of many of Waller's own brass play-ers, and the group's choice of tunes showed just what an accomplished and wide-ranging composer Wal-ler was, especially in the seldom-heard *Prisoner of Love*.

The task of trying to convey Waller's singing and outside stage

presence fell to Chicagoan singer Marilyn Middleton-Pollock, and although physically well-qualified, the daunting nature of capturing Fats's ebullient personality made this the least successful element of the programme. Middleton-Pollock's expertise centres on the vaudeville tradition, epitomised by her BBC radio series on the subject. Waller's roots were in this same tradition, touring with a singer

called Katie Krippen back in the early 1920s, and his hundreds of recordings are steeped in the world of travelling revues. Yet somehow, Waller's real vocal warmth and humour slipped through the net.

Middleton-Pollock's enthusiasm, vigorous movement and elaborate stage costumes failed to make up for consistently poor intonation. Waller may have lampooned many of the songs he sang, but even fortified by the gin bottle, his innate sense of pitch never failed, and it was his very musicality that made his satires successful.

ALYN SHIPTON

ALTHOUGH he tends to live on in the public imagination as a run-bustling vocalist and the leader of a hard-swinging band called the Rhythm, Fats Waller was also a prodigiously talented composer and pianist. Any tribute package needs to take into account all the aspects of the man, including his outside personality, if it is to be anything like a three-dimensional portrait.

Keith Smith's current touring package scores highly in Martin Litton's exquisite renditions of Fats's solo pieces, his strong striding left-hand and filigree right-hand decorations vividly bringing

back to life pieces such as *Handful of Keys* and *Smashing Thords*. Unusually, instead of playing these completely unaccompanied, Litton chose to work with the subtle drumming of John Armitage, perhaps unintentionally evoking the spirit of Waller's *London Suite*, the highlight of Fats's 1939 visit to Britain which was cut with just piano and drums.

Litton is also the heartbeat of

Lust lost in space

OPERA

The Rake's Progress
Festival Hall

STRAVINSKY'S good-humoured opera took some time to convince that it was big enough to fill the expanses of the Festival Hall, even with the audience clustered on the lower level. Barry Banks proved a tentative and reluctant Rake in Act 1, showing insufficient relish at the prospect of the fleshpots of London. His small, neatly produced voice was scarcely made for a house this size and too many of the ironies of the Auden-Kallman libretto were obscured. He came into his own during Rakewell's final delirium when, cursed with insanity, the sweeter tones of Adonis take over Tom's body and mind. But the role demands a heftier and more legging tenor.

His sweetheart, Anne Trulove, also needs a soprano who can provide much more than the gentle tones of fidelity. Stravinsky, after all, wrote the part for Schwarzkopf and provided her with a bravura aria at the end of Act 1. Joan Rodgers, now with plenty of backbone to the voice, took this piece in properly flamboyant style. At other times she was careful to keep Anne as a demure country girl, although

the final lullaby to poor, crazed Tom was a bumpy ride. Around them there were plenty of confident performers, starting with William Shimell's suave Nick Shadow, who conceals all malice until the final, fatal game of chance. Robin Leggate seized on the auctioneer Sellen, a gift to any tenor with good diction and a touch of the showman. Jane Henschel's Baba was also full of zest. Susan Bickley's Mother Goose came equipped with a leather bra used to lasso Tom as he is taken off for sexual instruction.

Andrew Davis, an old hand at this work from Glyndebourne, conducted the BBC Symphony with a feather-light, lyrical touch. The soloists deserve credit for dispensing with scores and playing up to one another whenever possible. Two Festival Hall suits solemnly pinned crayoned drawings, denoting change of scene and other



Joan Rodgers: Trulove

essentials such as Mother Goose's cuckoo clock and Shadow's bread machine, on boards either side of the stage. These were the work of Davis Jr. He did not get a credit in the programme, but papa gave him a curtain call and the audience gave him a big hand, perhaps without knowing why. It might not have been Hockney's *Rake*, but young Master Davis has a few years to go yet.

JOHN HIGGINS

Heirs apparent

3T
Wembley Arena

AND the Jackson Five began 3T. This is a serious musical dynasty: the brothers Taj, Tyrrell and Tj are the sons of Tito Jackson, which makes them the nephews of Michael, "the king of pop". The lineage has hardly been a hindrance to their young career. Uncle Mike signed them to his record label, produced their album, sang on their hit single and has been on hand to advise on their marketing as a black version of Boyzone.

The brothers are aged between 18 and 23 and play smooth contemporary American R'n'B grooves, yet it is difficult to see what makes them special. They move well enough but are more than a few steps behind their uncle. They sing sweetly but are several vertebrae short of spine-tingling. The songs are catchy but Babyface and D'Angelo must reject better material before breakfast.

What they have in abundance is sex appeal of the kind that makes teenage girls scream. Every shake and wiggle is greeted with a fresh bout. As 3T are addicted to such movements there is a lot of screaming. There are costume changes between almost every song, including one on

stage in which the boys strip down to their boxer shorts. Several members of the youthful audience appear close to fainting at this point.

The hit singles *Why and I Need You* are well received but strangely the loudest screams are reserved for a pointless version of *Wonderwall* and an utterly bizarre Jackson Five sequence in which father Tito joins them and they don 1970s afro wigs for a greatest hits medley.

It is possible 3T will turn out to have the talent to rival more famous members of the family and Tito, the youngest brother, is the most theatrical and probably blessed with the best voice, but they have a way to go. The support act, Shola Ama, a precocious 17-year-old purveyor of black British soul from Kensal Green, swung every bit as convincingly as this brotherhood from LA.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament: JUSTIN MEISSNER

Age: 24 in April.

Profession: Ballet dancer.

How does a Brisbane-born boy come to choose ballet instead of surfing? "It was the usual male dancer's story of starting classes because my sister used to go. But also my parents were professional ballroom dancers." He became a Great British Hope at 16 when he sent videotapes of himself to the Royal Ballet School and was accepted. While there he won the Adeline Genie gold medal; also a scholarship from the Prix de Lausanne competition. "The Lausanne scholarship funded my second year at the school, which was important because my parents wouldn't have been able to afford it."

Wasn't it a bit grim in London so far from home? "I lived in a hostel, sharing a room with three other boys — not ballet students — but in fact I had a wonderful time, meeting so many people, hearing fresh ideas, broadening my outlook. I learnt I



wasn't alone. Besides, my parents had given up a lot for me to come. So I felt that I paid back their faith when the Royal Ballet company took me on in 1992."

Present repertoire: The Fakir and Bronze Idol in the current Covent Garden revival of *La Bayadère*. Future debuts are the Fool in MacMillan's *Prince of the Pagodas* and Puck in Ashton's *The Dream*.

His toughest experience so far? "The Blue Skater in Ashton's *Les Patineurs*, especially at the end when you are alone on the darkened stage, pirouetting in the falling snow. The curtain comes down, then rises again, then finally comes down, but there's no time to stop. You've just got to stay in this tiny spotlight, your mouth is full of paper snowflakes, you've never felt so dizzy and your legs are like lead."

Is he a masochist to specialise in these virtuosic, physically painful roles? "No, it's just that I've got a high jump, and fast, bouncy dance is very much my thing. Sometimes, though, I would really love to dance slowly."

So does he resent being typecast? "I love what I do, although eventually I would like to finish my career with more expressive, romantic roles. But at the moment I feel very lucky. I am being paid to do a job I enjoy. How many people can say that?"

NADINE MEISSNER

Doctor who heals the poisoned planet

Eve Ann Prentice
talks to the expert
who makes
contaminated land
fit for habitation

Paul Syms brings the dead back to life. He knows more than most the truth of the old northern saying: where there's muck, there's brass. He is one of the world's leading experts on the redevelopment and valuation of contaminated land, those skull-and-crossbones sites poisoned by decades or even centuries of abuse.

Now Dr Syms, 50, has been appointed what is believed to be Britain's first Visiting Professor of Land and Property, at Sheffield Hallam University. In a project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, he is researching how new life can be breathed into contaminated land so it can be used for housing.

He is also a man who has put more than money where his mouth is, by happily seeing his son live in a house on reclaimed land in Manchester while at university.

So how does Dr Syms go about his mission to dig the dirt in places most of us would shudder to go near? And how sure can he be that contaminated land can ever be made really safe?

"The first thing is to look at the historical situation," he says. "You need to go out and walk on site to look at the historical aspects: was it once a railway goods yard, a gas plant or whatever? Sometimes there has been more than one use and you might have to go back 200 years to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution."

After researching the area's past, Dr Syms says he can then judge which contaminants are likely to be found and where to look for "particularly nasty hot-spots". A mechanical digger is usually then sent in to "dig a hole" and the soil analysed.

"Once you have that," he explains, "you can decide what needs to be done. You may treat the contamination by digging it out and treating it on site, or if it is really bad, by removing the contamination completely."

"Sometimes, even if you do all this, the residual risk perception is so great that you have to rule out residential development."

The worst case of contamination he has come across was at an old chemical works in Orpington, Kent. "It had been a plant for 80 years, and for 40 years of that time



Poisoned-land expert Dr Paul Syms and the estate of 119 homes under completion at Salford, Manchester, on the cleaned-up site of an old tram depot which had been contaminated

had been run by a very large and responsible company which made its records available. But there had been a practice of burying chemical drums in the soil up to four metres deep. The contamination came to light when the factory closed. It was an impossible site. A real eyesore.

"At another site, an old dye works for 100 years, any waste dyes had been emptied down a drain which ran into the River Mersey. You could see the coloured dyes in the river. The drain was cracked,

but it was not found until the factory next door was sold and the new owners wanted to put in a suspended floor and needed access to the old dye factory."

Dr Syms is optimistic, though, that he is winning the battle to reclaim poisoned land. A housing estate of 119 homes is nearing completion at Salford, Manchester, on the site of an old tram depot. "Deep maintenance pits had been filled over the years with zinc and cadmium from batteries, residues

from waste oils, waste ashes from local industry, lead and copper," he says. "Two or three years after work started on reclaiming the site, work began on the houses."

No one knows how much contaminated land there is in Britain, says Dr Syms, but he believes sites which have suffered significant harm probably cover fewer than 10,000 acres. "A very large amount has been reclaimed. In terms of urban regeneration projects, in the past 10 years land worth more than

£1 billion has been reclaimed — that is end value."

Dr Syms's appointment reflects the growing public concern about the environment.

His faculty at Sheffield has 60 members and 1,200 students and his job is sponsored by the Society for Valuers and Auctioneers.

Married with two adult sons, he is a valuer by training but has spent the past 15 years advising on how old industrial sites can be reclaimed. He feels his work "comes

down to a question of risk — actual and perceived risk."

Actual risks are where, for example, there is a danger that the foundations or water supply will be contaminated if a certain site is built on, or there is a possibility of atmospheric fallout from chemical plants.

"Then there are the perceived risks — when people are not happy about having their homes near a landfill site from a chemical plant," he says.

"But the Department of the Environment has been regularly monitoring sites for the past 20 years and I am optimistic that the amount of derelict land is reducing," Dr Syms believes that the greatest risk in the future is from accidents. "I think the likelihood of more contaminated land being produced is unlikely."

One of the phenomena of which Dr Syms has to take account is called the Pica Syndrome, "where children take up handfuls of soil and eat it". But, he adds: "The chances of a child with Pica becoming seriously ill is very remote; they would have to eat massive amounts of soil to come to harm in most cases."

The cost of reviving contaminated land varies enormously, but is usually between £150,000 and £300,000 an acre. "It used to be that digging it out and carting it away was the cheapest method, but now that is very expensive because there are fewer holes in the ground where you can take it."

There are other methods which are more selective, such as using microbes which occur naturally in the ground to digest the contaminants, and organic material is very susceptible to this."

MARKET MOVES

OUT OF SERVICE: a former Methodist church has gone on the market in Peasmarsh near Rye, East Sussex, with the proviso that it must not be used for religious purposes. The building, with planning permission for conversion to a 2-3 bedroom home, must also never be used as a dance hall, for gambling or the supply or sale of alcohol. Offers around £68,000 are being sought for the building, which also has permission for 2-3 reception rooms, bathroom, guest room with shower room, kitchen, courtyard, garage and garden. For information call Phillips & Stubbs in Rye on 01797 227338.

BATTLE ROYAL: a Devon hotel which has counted Churchill and The Beatles among its guests is to be converted to luxury retirement flats after an eight-year planning dispute. The Royal Hotel in Teignmouth became a near-derelect eyesore as local pressure groups campaigned for the building to remain a hotel. Now McCarthy & Stone have won permission to turn it into 72 retirement flats which are expected to sell for £60,000 to £125,000 each. Many of the apartments will have sea views. The building is separated from the sea by a short stroll across a green called The Den. The listed building will keep its

elegant frontage, and a grand central staircase is to be restored. For information call Freephone 0800 919132.

AS THE Edinburgh Festival prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year, a huge apartment has gone on sale near the city's West End. The refurbished apartment has four bedrooms, one with en suite dressing room and bathroom, hall, drawing room, dining room, bathroom, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room and shared garden. Offers over £158,000; information from Rettie and Co, Edinburgh on 0131-220 4160.



Going for a song: Peasmarsh church

A new service makes the search for land for an ideal home much easier

The first time Paul Mason built his own home, finding a plot of land could not have been easier. He simply sold off his existing house and moved to a site at the bottom of the garden.

Next time, things were different. For two years he scoured the estate agents and local newspapers in Bedfordshire looking for a place on which to build. He finally settled on a quarter of an acre village plot which had been used as a car park.

Three years later, he and his family live in a 2,250 sq ft house with four bedrooms, four reception rooms and a playroom over the garage. Having designed the place himself, it took three-and-a-half months to build using the timber frame method of construction.

Mr Mason says: "We found it very difficult to find small building plots. There was virtually nothing around, and it would probably be even more difficult now."

Around 20,000 people a year are estimated to commission their own homes in the UK and for many of them the toughest hurdle is the first: buying a site on which to set their dreams.

Associated Self Build Architects (ASBA) believe that for every person who built their own home last year, another five had their aspirations frustrated because they were unable to locate a plot.

Julian Owen, the director of ASBA, says: "It is not so much a shortage of land because green-field sites are available for much bigger housing developments. It's the one-off building plots in the country which are so difficult to come by, often because local authorities are reluctant to grant planning permission."

The South East is recognised as being the most difficult area to find modest-sized building plots, but in the South West, Bob Douglas, General Accident's land and new homes manager, says that he usually has 50 people looking for such sites at any one time. "The majority," he adds, "claim to be able to buy the land without selling their house, which makes it very competitive."

It was in response to the difficulties experienced by people looking for parcels of land that the self-build and renovation magazine *Individ-*



Michael and Emma Holmes on the site of their new house, located through Plotfinder

In pursuit of the perfect plot

ual Homes decided to set up Plotfinder, a database of both building plots and renovation opportunities for sale.

Plotfinder was launched to the public at the magazine's Home Building and Renovation Show last weekend, although readers have been able to avail themselves of the service since November.

So far, there are more than 4,000 entries on the database, but the number is expected to rise considerably. Gill Dawson, who is compiling it, says that empty plots of land either for single or multiple building account for 75 per cent of those entries. Most come with planning permission.

The rest of the database is made up of houses in need of renovation, and schools, barns, stable blocks, churches, railway stations, water towers and other buildings ripe for conversion. Information, constantly updated, is gathered from estate agents, landowners, developers, surveyors, government departments and auctioneers.

Since November more than 2,500 people have used the service, including Michael

Holmes, the editor of *Individual Homes*. He spent eight months ringing around estate agents before finding a half-acre site in an Oxfordshire village through Plotfinder.

The former orchard overlooks open countryside and is next to a 12th-century church. Mr Holmes and his wife Emma paid £90,000 for the site and they expect to move into a four-bedroom "Georgian" stone house in September, designed by Four Square Design, of Berkshire.

There will be flagstones throughout the ground floor, reclaimed floorboards elsewhere, underground heating and sash windows. Cost of building the home should be between £100,000 and £110,000. By the time it is finished, he reckons the property will be worth about £330,000. The average cost of building your own home is £40 to £50 a sq ft.

People who want to use the Plotfinder service must ring a hotline and state which counties they would like details about. There is a subscription service — three months costing £9.99 with four mailings, and six months costing £16.99 with eight mailings. Prices vary

greatly. Plotfinder has advertised a site at Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, with consent for a detached house for more than £200,000 and one with permission for a three-bedroom detached house at Manea, Cambridgeshire for £5,500.

There has been an ex-RAF transmitting station in Yorkshire set in two acres for £80,000 and a part-stone building available for conversion to a one-bedroom cottage in Hereford & Worcester for £10,000.

Eight serviced plots at Wignore in the same county were put onto the database this month for £55,000 each by a company called Homelands of England. The firm was specifically set up last year to acquire small development sites, put in services, and then sell individual plots to those who wish to build or commission houses themselves.

David Rose, the marketing director, says that Homelands is the only company in the UK to deliver this service. More sites in Sussex, Kent, Bedfordshire and Suffolk are being planned.

"We and our private-investor backers envisage a market of huge potential," he says. "Every plot we bring to market we know we will sell."

CHRISTIAN DYMOND

Plotfinder's hotline is 0891-516 536 and calls cost 50p a minute. To subscribe, phone 01527-836 600.

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION

THE TIMES

Virgin flights to Jo'burg worth £80,000 to be won

51 PAIRS OF TICKETS, PLUS TWO NIGHTS AT SABI SABI FOR OUR FIRST PRIZE WINNER

The Times, in association with Virgin Atlantic, gives you and a partner the chance to win return flights on Virgin's service direct from London to Johannesburg, daily from July 15, 1997. We have 51 pairs of return tickets worth a total of £80,000 to give away.

The first prize winner will receive a pair of Virgin Atlantic Economy tickets and two nights at Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve, including flights from Jo'burg to the reserve, adjoining the Kruger National Park.

Fifty readers can win a pair of return tickets for travel in Economy. All Virgin's Jo'burg flights are on Airbus A340 aircraft featuring the Arcadia interactive entertainment system, with 24 channels of award-winning entertainment on personal seatback TV screens.

The winner and a companion will be taken on safari into the African bush with trained game rangers and Shangaan trackers. So diverse is the habitat and wildlife at Sabi Sabi they will have an excellent chance of seeing the "Big Five" — elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion and leopard.

THE TIMES
virgin
atlantic
TOKEN 3

HOW TO ENTER

Simply collect four different numbered tokens from The Times this week and answer the question on the entry form which will appear again on Saturday. Tokens have also appeared in Weekend last Saturday, along with other tokens and coupons. The closing date for entries is Saturday 29 March 1997.

CHANGING TIMES

Time to cry foul on an irregular practice

I don't think I will bother to write this column today. Not in the mood, but weary after all that skating in Switzerland. Don't want to let myself down with a piece that's not up to standard.

But, as you see, I am writing it anyway. Partly this is the ever-present desire to pay the mortgage. But the important fact here is not that writing is what I do: a writer is what I am. So here I am, writing.

The late Geoffrey Green, former football correspondent of this parish, had an aphorism for the guidance of all journalists. "If you can't write a good piece," he would say, "write a bad one."

He did not mean that second-rate pieces were acceptable. He meant that a writer's minimum obligation is to write. You always write, you always get it there in time and you always provide enough copy. The variable in the equation is quality.

Now, let us zip-pan to the Tewin Irregulars in their palmist days. And the nightmare of Saturday nights, when a telephone call brings a fresh disaster. The fish can't play, he'd forgotten he'd promised to go to the seaside. Steady Eddy is through to the golf final and he's very sorry. Well, do you know if Giles is free? Or Jason?

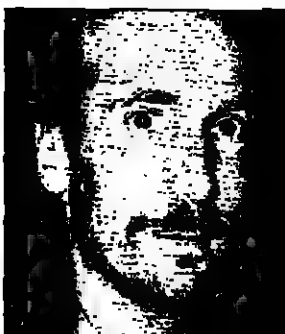
And so the ring-round begins. Never mind, Jason, just thought I'd ask, send Emma my love. Hello Dant! Yes, it has been a long time hasn't it. How's Jane? Oh dear. I am sorry to hear that. But since you're a bachelor again, you may fancy a game of cricket tomorrow...

By nine in the evening, shame is long gone. Well, not all shame. Nicky, I'm awfully sorry but we're crying off. We simply can't get a team out. Never! I might ring Nicky to ask if he has a few players he could lend me. I might ask if we can agree the toss now and bat first, hoping the rump of the side will arrive before 4pm. But the one thing you do not do is cancel.

I have played against and alongside all kinds of last-second picks: a coach driver (who received an inadvertent first-ball beamer); Rachael Heyhoe Flint's double (who received a not totally inadvertent snorter into the groin first ball); various groundsmen, passers-by, drinkers, small boys. The results were sometimes humiliating. But we always played. What, weasel out of the fixture? That would not be cricket.

Now what I am writing about, of course, is Middlesbrough Football Club. Middlesbrough really did say, I'm not writing my column today, I'm not in the mood. They actually did phone Nicky and tell him that the entire game was off.

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

not in the mood. They actually did phone Nicky and tell him that the entire game was off.

Or to be pedantic, on December 21 they failed to produce a team to play Blackpool Rovers, claiming that they had 23 of their 40 players unavailable because of injury and illness. For this, they were docked three points by the FA Premier League and fined £50,000. As a point of interest, Middlesbrough next played on Boxing Day, and, refreshed after their

rest, defeated a weary Everton for their first win in 13 league matches.

Today Middlesbrough make their appeal against this loss of three points, every one of which they need as they struggle against relegation. They have spent a good deal of money hiring the most costly legal help in order to show that they are more to be pitied than blamed.

The counter-argument will be that Middlesbrough have obligations, as a professional football club, and must fulfil them. But minimal professional standards, on the Geoffrey Green Principle, are only half the story.

Agreeing to play sport at all is an obligation. Obviously a professional outfit has obligations to paying supporters, but any sporting organisation has obligations to its opponents: that day and throughout the duration of any competition it has agreed to enter.

Missing a fixture is not like closing the shop because of staff sickness. It is more like a gambling debt. If you bet with a friend and lose, you will be quicker to pay him than you are the milkman. The milkman's debt is a matter of obligation, the gambling loss is a debt of honour.

And Middlesbrough wretched on the footballer's debt of honour. They not only did something that the most

despised journalist in the press box of the Riverside Stadium would not do, they did something that even the Tewin Irregulars would find unacceptable. And that is stooping pretty low.

Now I have nothing against Middlesbrough. The bravery of their strategy — bringing in the best players in the world, paying them a mint and seeing if they could inspire the journeymen around them — is worth cheering, even if the flaws have been obvious.

But it is a law of sport at every level: you honour your fixtures. Middlesbrough would have had the admiration and sympathy of the world if they had lined up against Blackburn with the groundsmen, the snottiest apprentice, two little lads and the tea lady.

But they refused to play and it will be an absurdity if the points are restored. If I were running the appeal, I would dock them an extra three points on top for wasting the nation's time. Oh, and if Middlesbrough fancy a Sunday afternoon cricket match next season, don't ring the Tewin Irregulars. We have our standards, perhaps not of sporting excellence, but certainly of what constitutes sporting behaviour.

Bristol City rule out big-name appointment

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

BRISTOL CITY have set their sights realistically low as they search for a manager to replace Joe Jordan, who left the club by mutual consent on Monday night. It is unlikely that Kevin Keegan or Ray Wilkins, both available for a return to management, will be considered by the Nationwide League second division club.

Instead, City are focusing their efforts on the lower reaches of the League structure. "We can't afford one of the big names," Scott Davidson, the City chairman, said yesterday. "I've heard Ray Wilkins has already been mentioned but we're not looking for a player-manager, either."

"We need someone who has been successful in the lower divisions. We want him to concentrate on coaching while the board of directors will look after transfers and the financial side of things."

Jordan, 45, had been in charge for 28 months — his second stint at Ashton Gate — but, after six defeats in eight matches, City had slipped away from the play-off zone. Davidson felt that it was time for change.

"If the new man could get us promotion, that would be a bonus," he said. "What we're really looking towards is next season."

City have already received a number of inquiries about the vacancy. When Davidson returns tomorrow from a business trip to Dublin, the applications will be sifted through. "It would be nice to make an appointment before the weekend but it will more probably be next week," he said.

John Ward, the former assistant manager at Aston Villa, would be a popular choice in the past, though he managed Bristol Rovers — City's bitter rivals — for three seasons until he was dismissed in May last year. "I'd sit down and think about it in due course," Ward said yesterday. "Everybody knows I want to get back into management."

Gerry Sweeney, Jordan's

assistant, took charge for the second division match away to Crewe Alexandra last night but is unlikely to be offered the job permanently. More suitable candidates include Mel Machin, of Bournemouth, David Webb, the unsettled Brentford manager, Sammy McIlroy, of Macclesfield Town, and John Rudge, the Port Vale manager.

City's decisive board meeting lasted most of Monday, with Jordan eventually called in during the evening to hear his fate.

Whoever succeeds him will inherit the problem of 16 players whose contracts need renewing during the summer. The club also has a suspended two-point deduction hanging over it, until the end of the year, after the City-Rovers derby at Ashton Gate in December was marred by crowd disturbances.

David Ellery, of England, will be referee for the first leg of the UEFA Cup semi-final between Tenerife and Schalke 04 on April 8. His appointment was confirmed yesterday by UEFA, the European governing body, which also revealed that Nikolai Levnikov, of Russia, will take charge of the away leg of Manchester United's European Cup semi-final against Borussia Dortmund on April 9. Urs Meier, of Switzerland, will handle the second leg at Old Trafford two weeks later.

Hellmut Krug, of Germany, has been appointed referee for the first leg of Liverpool's Cup Winners' Cup semi-final away to Paris Saint-Germain on April 10. Rune Pedersen, of Norway, will be responsible for the Anfield return on April 24.

Nigel Quashie, the Queens Park Rangers midfielder player, has signed a five-year contract. Quashie has recently returned to reserve team action, having being out for almost a year after a bout of glandular fever.

Karl Ready, the Wales international defender, has also committed himself to QPR for a further four years.

Football's integrity bolstered by sporting gesture at Highbury

Fowler praised from highest level

BY ROB HUGHES

A MOMENT of Corinthian spirit on the moneyed sportsfields of Great Britain is like a pearl on a beach of stones. Every one should be examined and cherished.

On Monday night and yesterday, Robbie Fowler, the Liverpool forward, was lauded far and wide for his apparent attempt to dissuade Gerald Ashby, the referee, from granting him a penalty in the heat of the FA Cup Premier League match against Arsenal at Highbury.

TOP FOUR

Man Utd	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1	31	18	9	4	61	33	65
2	31	17	8	6	53	36	60
3	31	16	9	7	52	36	57
4	30	15	8	8	58	38	52

MANCHESTER UNITED: Apr 12 v Derby (H); Apr 12 v Blackburn (A); Apr 19 v Liverpool (A); May 3 v Leicester (A); May 6 v Middlesbrough (H); May 11 v Newcastle (H). To be arranged: v Newcastle (H).

LIVERPOOL: Apr 12 v Coventry (H); Apr 12 v Sunderland (A); Apr 19 v Everton (H); Apr 19 v Manchester United (H); May 3 v Tottenham (H); May 6 v Wimbledon (A); May 11 v Sheffield Wednesday (H).

ARSENAL: Apr 12 v Chelsea (A); Apr 12 v Leicester (H); Apr 19 v Blackburn (H); Apr 21 v Coventry (A); May 3 v Newcastle (H); May 11 v Derby (A).

NEWCASTLE UNITED: Apr 12 v Sunderland (H); Apr 12 v Sheffield Wednesday (A); Apr 19 v Chelsea (H); Apr 19 v Derby (H); May 3 v Arsenal (A); May 6 v West Ham (A); May 11 v Nottingham Forest (H). To be arranged: v Manchester United (H).

"Your reaction in the penalty incident, in which you visibly tried to persuade the referee from awarding a penalty in your favour, did you great honour," Sepp Blatter, the general secretary of FIFA, the world governing body of football, wrote in an open letter from Zurich to Fowler, faxed to the Liverpool Echo yesterday. "At a time when there is a disturbing trend towards cheating, your example in such an important match helps to maintain the integrity of the game."

In addition, Fowler, who had gone to ground at the England training camp at Bisham Abbey, was praised by Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, who said: "I know Robbie has a



Ashby points to the spot unmoved by the protests of Fowler, right, and Seaman against his decision to award Liverpool a penalty at Highbury

reputation for being a scally-wag, but nobody can fault him. He showed his concern that David Seaman, a fellow professional, might be sent off. The pitch is always the best stage for players to show what they are made of."

Ashby remained silent after issuing the simple statement: "I didn't hear what Fowler said."

Clearly, courtesy of the television camera lens, Fowler was pleading with the referee for something. Seaman recalled that Fowler, as he got to his feet, was insisting that the goalkeeper had not touched him. Others, including Lee Dixon, the Arsenal defender, suggested that Fowler had mouthed "no penalty!". Others

interpreted his inarticulate first reaction as trying to ensure that, because there was no detectable contact, he himself would not receive a yellow card for alleged "diving".

Given the rarity of the matter, given that the actions of sporting idols of Fowler's age — 22 — can influence the behaviour of youngsters, perhaps it behoves everybody to think the purest thoughts and to congratulate him.

Indeed, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, did so at once. "It was a big fair play from Fowler," he said. "I have never seen a player do that, though I have many times seen the opposite. I compare it to Björn Borg, when he was 17 and about to win the French

Open for the first time... and on match point he said 'no, the ball was in'."

As rare, as welcoming, as valuable as the gesture was, Seaman brought smiles among the media afterwards. Asked what more Fowler could have done, he responded: "He could have kicked the penalty wide."

In the event, Fowler's somewhat tame and telegraphed kick was saved by Seaman, but Jason McAteer, predatory in the extreme and not afflicted by implication in the build-up, stroked the rebounding ball into the net for a goal that could be influential in the championship.

So, in little more than a month, the course of the FA

Cup and the Premiership could have turned on penalties that Sky Television technology shows ought never to have been given.

The winning goal for Chelsea in the FA Cup fifth-round tie against Leicester City at Stamford Bridge came from a penalty that looked obviously unfair. Liverpool's winner at Highbury came after a penalty when the action deceived the naked eye.

With 20 or more cameras at a match, BSkyB can and does dissect every decision attempted by the arbiter, but that must not be allowed to persuade the authorities in sport to weaken a referee's rule, or to interrupt the rhythm of a game by acquiescing to the

siren call for television replays to be used as on-the-spot judgments.

There are cheats who would soon find ways to use such interruptions to destroy the trust on which football depends.

Wenger's memory is nice, but not perfect. It was Mats Wilander, a fellow Swede of Borg, who in 1982 won the French Open tennis title when he was 17. In his semi-final against Jose-Luis Clerc, standing at match point, Jean Gignat, a 19-year-old Frenchman, the linesman and umpire, ruled out a forehand from Clerc. "That's not the way I want to win the point," Wilander insisted. "The ball was good, replay the point."

FOR THE RECORD

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA) Los Angeles Lakers 109 New Jersey 64

BROWNS ALL-STAR GAME, Miami 162 Sacn 148 (at Sheffield Arena)

CRICKET

PERTH: Sheffield Shield (final day of the first Test) 320 and 309 Western Australia 165 and 324 (1st Test) 153 and 127 (2nd Test) 153 and 127 (3rd Test) 153 and 127 (4th Test) 153 and 127 (5th Test) 153 and 127 (6th Test) 153 and 127 (7th Test) 153 and 127 (8th Test) 153 and 127 (9th Test) 153 and 127 (10th Test) 153 and 127 (11th Test) 153 and 127 (12th Test) 153 and 127 (13th Test) 153 and 127 (14th Test) 153 and 127 (15th Test) 153 and 127 (16th Test) 153 and 127 (17th Test) 153 and 127 (18th Test) 153 and 127 (19th Test) 153 and 127 (20th Test) 153 and 127 (21st Test) 153 and 127 (22nd Test) 153 and 127 (23rd Test) 153 and 127 (24th Test) 153 and 127 (25th Test) 153 and 127 (26th Test) 153 and 127 (27th Test) 153 and 127 (28th Test) 153 and 127 (29th Test) 153 and 127 (30th Test) 153 and 127 (31st Test) 153 and 127 (32nd Test) 153 and 127 (33rd Test) 153 and 127 (34th Test) 153 and 127 (35th Test) 153 and 127 (36th Test) 153 and 127 (37th Test) 153 and 127 (38th Test) 153 and 127 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RUGBY UNION

Europeans must cut demands

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

REPRESENTATIVES of the five nations have the opportunity in Dublin today to make far-reaching decisions over the structure of European club rugby, but only if they can see concessions over the undue demands now being made on the game's leading players.

The reconstituted board of the European Rugby Cup Ltd (ERCL) will assemble in constructive mood and progress should be made, though it will do so only if it is acknowledged that there must be self-regulation on international fixtures as well as in a European and domestic context.

"We are seeing very clearly this month and next month that there are too many matches," Peter Wheeler, the Leicester chief executive, said yesterday. Wheeler and Bill Beaumont, who will represent English interests, recognise that the players must be given some break from the ad hoc regime that professional rugby has imposed.

"I don't think it does any good for one section to point the finger at the other two — international, European or domestic — and suggest there are too many matches," Wheeler said. "All three sections have to agree on a sensible policy which will reduce playing commitments."

Indeed, Michel Palmie, one of France's representatives, will take to Dublin proposals for European fixtures to take place every third week during the first half of the season, though the French also seek the expansion of the European Conference, the second-tier competition, to include teams from Spain, Holland and Germany.

The block-booking of November for international fixtures represents a huge hole in the club season, but England have an additional reason for seeking to stagger the European competition, because there will be a new sponsor for the first and second divisions.

The company taking over from the Courage brewing firm is likely to be known next

month, but will clearly seek an impressive start to the season rather than a fortnight of games before a long break for Europe.

More pointedly, all the ERC directors will hope to receive details of the recent five-year broadcasting agreement with satellite television so that club budgets can be drawn up.

Ironically, Brive, the Heineken Cup-holders, have hinted at attempts to reverse the trend of French players signing for British clubs. They have been in touch with Nigel Walker, the Cardiff and Wales wing, though Walker has told them that he still has a year of his existing contract to run.

Brive are also considering whether to play Christophe Lamaison this weekend, despite his 30-day suspension for foul play in the France game with Scotland earlier this month. They perceive the ban as a restraint of trade and have asked the French federation for a ruling.

Chris Sheasty, back from the World Cup sevens in Hong Kong, can help Wasps to go six points clear at the top of the Courage Clubs Championship tonight. Sheasty plays at No 8 in the XV that will meet London Irish at Loftus Road, but Simon Geoghegan must be satisfied with a place among the Bath replacements when they play away to West Hartlepool tomorrow.

Geoghegan, a long shot for selection next week by the British Isles, has played only one league match this season before operations on his toes.

Steve Lander, who officiated in the controversial Pilkington Cup final between Bath and Leicester last May, will referee the semi-final between Gloucester and Leicester at Kingsholm on Saturday. Neil Back, the Leicester flanker, earned a suspension when he pushed Lander after the final whistle last May and, should Back be selected, it will be the first occasion on which he and Lander have taken the field together since.



Vettori, of New Zealand, is bowled by De Silva, of Sri Lanka, in the one-day international in Christchurch yesterday. Sri Lanka won by six wickets after the first game was rained off. Scoreboard, page 48

SAILING

Golding maintains lead despite damage

By EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

DESPITE a knock-down last week that caused considerable damage but no injuries, Mike Golding's disciplined crew on Group 4 is continuing to lead the storm-battered BT Global Challenge fleet as the yachts grind their way past the Kerguelen Islands in the Southern Ocean.

Yesterday Group 4 held a slender lead over Chris Tibbs, on *Concert*, whose performance on this fourth leg of the race, taking the crews from Sydney to Cape Town, underlined how strongly he would have been in contention for overall honours had *Concert* not been dismantled during the second leg.

Tibbs is just 20 miles ahead of Mervyn Owen, on *Global Teamwork*, in third position, with the two yachts in second and third places overall. *Toshiba Wave Warrior*, skippered by Simon Walker, and *Save The Children* (Andy Hindley) are in a close-fought

contest for fourth and fifth places respectively. The fleet is continuing to fight unrelenting westerly gales in the southern Indian Ocean, causing considerable damage to several boats including *Pause To Remember*, which broke her boom early on Sunday at a position around 3,200 miles from Cape Town.

Skipped by Captain Tom O'Connor, the chief sailing instructor of the Irish Defence Forces, *Pause* was yesterday sailing along in thirteenth position under headsails and a free-flying trysail on the mast as her crew continued its repair to the boom.

It has taken three of them 48 hours to complete the work, which has involved cutting a lift section of the boom to use as a sleeve to join the two main pieces together. The assembly has been secured using bolts cannibalised from a bar in the forepeak locker used to hang spare sheets.

ROWING

Impressive Oxford show early promise

OXFORD produced some interesting exercises in their morning outing yesterday (Mike Rosewell writes). René Mijnders, their coach, had them hitting rates of 65, 51 and 48 strokes per minute in bursts of upright rowing, body-swing rowing and quarter-slide activity. Apparently, when they beat the France national eight in Amsterdam over 250 metres ten days ago, they hit a rate of 50 on full slide.

The Boat Race rate will be about 34/35 and, on their way home to Putney from Barnes, Mijnders had his crew doing bursts of 20 strokes at this rate.

Cambridge had an outing before Oxford but did very little work. Even in the smooth water, the boat was tipping to bow side and being rigged with stroke on that side.

A later Cambridge outing proved little better. On high water, with swirling waves, the crew's body-side hunch persisted in a five-minute row, at 27/28, from Hammersmith Bridge to the Bandstand.

Long chats from the coaches, Robin Williams and Harry Mahon, followed and a second five minutes at 28, against the tide from Hammersmith to



BOAT RACE 1997
Saturday, 4.10pm
TV: Grandstand (BBC1)
TIMES OF OUTINGS TODAY
CAMBRIDGE: 1.30pm
OXFORD: 10am and 2pm

Barn Elms, was marginally better.

Oxford had no such balance problems when they warmed up for an evening outing against an Old Blues crew. In an initial 15-minute downstream row from Chiswick Steps, Oxford took a length in spite of settling to 35". In the second row, a five-minute piece, Oxford gave the Old Blues a two-length lead, were level after 1 1/2 minutes and won by seven lengths.

Some observers thought that Oxford would have won last year if the Boat Race had been on Wednesday. With three days to go, Mijnders has to keep his crew focused.

CRICKET

Gibraltar serve up bowling fit for Bacchus

FAOUD BACCHUS, the former West Indies Test player, scored 100 not out as the United States batsmen took advantage of the Gibraltar bowling to score 312 for six, the highest total of the first two days of the ICC Trophy in Malaysia (a Special Correspondent writes).

Bacchus, one of 11 West Indians in the United States squad, was watched by "Bobby" Narasimha Rao, the Indian assistant coach, who was on the opposing side when Bacchus opened the batting for West Indies against India in January 1979.

Rao, on a spying mission ahead of the key match tomorrow in group D between the two teams, saw little to disturb his confident Ireland side as Gibraltar dropped five catches en route to losing by 189 runs.

At the start of this qualifying tournament, Kenya were but inks for one of the three World Cup places on offer, but they stuttered for a second day before passing Singapore's score of 89 with only two wickets to spare.

Martin Sujil, who earlier took three for nine, steered Kenya home with 14 not out. The form of the first two days suggests that Ireland and the United States could squeeze Kenya into third place in the group and out of contention.

Holland again bowled well to dismiss Namibia for 90 before passing that total without losing a wicket; they are now within one win of qualifying from group C. Bangladesh confirmed their superiority in group B, beating West Africa by nine wickets in short time.

The weakest of the four groupings is group D, in which Bermuda, the top seeds, were surprisingly beaten by Hong Kong. In the same group, Scotland were unconvincing as they began their campaign with a six-wicket success against Papua New Guinea.

SCORES: Group A: Singapore 89 (44.4 overs), Kenya 100-6 (80 overs), Kenya won by two wickets. United States 312-6 (50 overs), Gibraltar 123-5 (104 overs), United States won by 189 runs. Group B: Bangladesh 123-5 (20 overs), West Africa 89-2 (20 overs), Bangladesh won by nine wickets. Malaysia 129 (49.5 overs), Argentina 108 (40 overs), Malaysia won by 61 runs. Group C: Ireland 80 (48.5 overs), Holland 81-0 (23.5 overs), Ireland won by six wickets. Sri Lanka 128 (47.1 overs), Canada 126-2 (28.2 overs), Sri Lanka won by four wickets. Group D: Bermuda 227-0 (10 overs), Hong Kong 227-0 (10 overs), Bermuda won by 10 wickets. Scotland 121-4 (28.1 overs), Scotland won by six wickets.

Diary, page 18

Dalmiya is chosen as new ICC leader

JAGMOHAN DALMIYA, of India, will be the next head of the International Cricket Council (ICC) for a three-year term after the retirement of Sir Clyde Walcott in June.

Singh Dungarpur, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said that the board had decided on Dalmiya as the country's chosen nominee last month, before the ICC decided in Kuala Lumpur that India would select the next ICC chief after the retirement of Walcott, who comes from Barbados.

Sanath Jayasuriya, scored 79 from 63 balls and Aravinda de Silva a swift 66 as Sri Lanka coasted to a six-wicket victory in the first one-day international against New Zealand in Christchurch yesterday. Chasing a meagre total of 201, Sri Lanka reached their target in 35.3 overs.

Motor rallying: Kenneth Eriksson, of Sweden, held a slender lead in the Rally of Portugal yesterday as Tommi Makinen, the world champion, from Finland, closed to within one second after 17 stages. Eriksson, driving a Subaru, had started the second leg with a 14-second lead but slowly lost his advantage on the four morning stages.

Cricket: Queensland completed a 160-run victory over Western Australia in Perth yesterday to secure their second Sheffield Shield victory in three years. They were held only by Tom Moody, the Worcestershire captain, who made 152 during Western Australia's second innings of 304.

Boxing: Henry Wharton, from York, was yesterday given his third chance to win a world super-middleweight title when he was paired with Robin Reid, the world Boxing Council champion, in a Frank Warren promotion at the Nymex Arena in Manchester on May 3.

Cricket: Nottinghamshire have offered Lance Klusener, the South Africa all-rounder, a one-year contract as they seek to replace the injured Chris Cairns. He is expected to make a decision before the weekend.

Ice Hockey: Steve Lyle, 17, the Cardiff Devils goaltender, has been selected as player of the year by the British Ice Hockey Writers Association.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

PUBLIC NOTICES

CHARITY COMMISSION

Charity Commission Notice: The Charity Commission has received information from the Charity Commission for England and Wales that the following charities have failed to file their annual accounts for the year ending 31 March 1996:

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LEGAL NOTICES

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TENNIS: HINGIS, WILLIAMS AND KOURNIKOVA OFFERING REFRESHING ALTERNATIVE



Bjorkman, of Sweden, in action this week at Key Biscayne, where he has knocked Rios and Philippoussis out of contention

Men's game needs new blood

FROM ALIX RAMSAY
IN KEY BISCAINE

THERE are moves about, heretical moves, to combine men and women at a series of tennis tournaments next year. It is heresy in as much as the men's game has, for so long, been the superior product, basking in the combined glories of Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Boris Becker and the boys. Women's tennis? Who cares? It is just Steffi Graf and Monica Seles.

Looking at what is left of the men's draw here, though, the men are struggling to keep pace with the women. Since the tournament began, the spotlight has picked out the new names of the WTA Tour while the men's crowd-pullers have been distinctly quiet.

Sure enough, Sampras is still going strong — on Monday he skipped past Francisco Clavet to reach the fourth round 6-3, 7-6 — but, when it

comes to moments of history, Sampras winning a match is hardly worth a mention.

While the women's tour is rubbing its hands with glee at the prospect of Martina Hingis, Venus Williams and Anna Kournikova growing up together, the men have few new names to steal the limelight, while the old faithfuls are not as reliable as before. Agassi is a lost cause, Chang has all the fire and passion of a public-service announcement, so much so that he makes Sampras appear fascinating.

The men's fourth round draw here features only four seeds, alongside a group of four Swedes, two Spaniards and an assortment of names that struggle to raise a flicker of recognition outside their own country. Even there it is touch and go with Gaston Elias, an unknown qualifier from Argentina, who faces Sergi Bruguera.

The bright young things

making their mark on the circuit are equally unreliable. Marcelo Rios oozes talent but seems unconcerned whether he wins or not. Mark Philippoussis has all the right qualifications — tall, at 6ft 4in, and with a thundering service — but his form is up and down. This week both of them fell foul of Jonas Bjorkman, another of Sweden's quietly gifted players, Rios in the third round and Philippoussis yesterday.

It was not a good day for Philippoussis. Three points

into the match he fell and had to have treatment to an ankle before losing his service. From there on he was playing catch-up as Bjorkman confused the issue by reading his service, getting to it early and forcing Philippoussis to play.

That is seldom a wise move for Philippoussis. He has the ability to leather the ball with such venom that he can either deliver a scorching winner or send the ball into the next county. Yesterday there was rather too much of the latter as he went out 6-3, 6-4.

Maybe it would help if Philippoussis could find a single voice of reason to help him. Over the three years of his career, he has changed coaches more often than his socks. He began with Nick, his father, before working through Ian Ockleshaw, Paul McNamara, Gavin Hopper, Brett Stephens, Tony Roche, Nick Bollettieri, Todd Vinny, back to McNamara and then

back again to Hopper — and Philippoussis is only 20.

Still, provided that they leave his service alone, nobody is going to complain. Yesterday he was regularly hitting the 120mph mark, with a 134mph throw in. That service, though, can cause problems and not just to the man on the other side of the net. Philippoussis does not expect to see his service returned and when it is he is rattled. His solution to that is to try to hit the ball harder and harder, which just gets him into more trouble.

At least, with his Ferrari and, on his day, the ability to beat the best, he has something approaching a marketable image. If the rest of the top ten could match the quality of the tennis with a hint of a personality, they might just grab the headlines from the women, even if they have missed their chance here in Florida.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Wakefield clubs to pool resources

AS WELL as coming together to build a dual-purpose stadium, Wakefield Trinity rugby league and Wakefield rugby union clubs are looking to exchange players and will pool coaching and marketing resources in a new joint venture (Christopher Irvine writes).

In selling their grounds and moving to nearby Durrant, the site of the proposed Yorkshire County Cricket Club headquarters, the Wakefield clubs

are following the leads of the league and union clubs in Leeds, who share Headingley, and London Broncos, who moved in with Harlequins last month at the Stoop memorial ground.

The 15,000-capacity stadium could be ready within two years, ahead of the plan by Yorkshire cricket to leave Headingley. Assistance will be sought from the National Lottery. "We are not going to be stuck on the end of York-

shire cricket. This will be completely divorced," Nigel Foster, the Wakefield union club chairman, said.

In the continuing farce over Iestyn Harris's future at Warrington, the club, not for the first time in nine months of on-off discussions with St Helens about the £1.35 million-listed Great Britain back, issued a statement yesterday that said negotiations with the Knowsley Road club "have been terminated".

SNOOKER

Griffiths emphasises value of experience

BY PHIL YATES

THAT a year away from the competitive fires that burn within Terry Griffiths quickly became obvious as he established a 6-3 lead over Alfie Burden in the final qualifying round of the Embassy world championship at Telford yesterday.

Griffiths, 49, the only player to capture the title on his first visit to the Crucible Theatre, retired at the end of last season, when 23rd in the world rankings, in order to concentrate on his duties as the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association director of coaching.

Those who watched him frequently outwit Burden found it hard to believe that he had not played a match for 11 months. Burden led 3-1 before Griffiths, who shot to national prominence by becoming world champion in 1979, brought his vast experience to bear.

He had runs of 72 and 52 during a sustained comeback that left him requiring only four of the remaining ten frames to secure a place in the

first-round draw. In typically tenacious fashion, he stole one frame on the blue and two others on the black.

Dennis Taylor, winner at the Crucible in 1985, and Willie Thorne, another of the game's easily recognisable forty-somethings, also overcame hesitant starts. Taylor fought back from 5-1 down against Lee Walker to trail only 5-4 while Thorne transformed a 4-2 deficit against Dominic Dale into a 5-4 lead.

Andy Hicks, who included Steve Davis and Peter Ebdon among his notable scalps en route to the last four of the 1995 world championship, established a commanding 7-2 advantage over Matthew Stevens, of Carmarthen.

Hicks, who has reached the semi-final stage of the United Kingdom championship, Benson and Hedges Masters and European Open, constructed breaks of 44, 46, 120, 42, 69 and 74 while moving into a strong position against an opponent who defeated Stephen Hendry in the first round of the Grand Prix this season.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 40

GREGORY POWDER

(a) A laxative powder, containing rhubarb, magnesium and ginger. The compound of a Scottish doctor, who invented it, and died in 1822. This should surprise no one. "Mmmmm," you murmur appreciatively, as you taste the herbal dust your hostess has just sprinkled liberally on your Spag Bog. "It is not unlike gregory powder, isn't it?" and let the triple negative fight for itself.

PLENIUNARY

(a) Pertaining to the full moon. A usefully obscure word for excuses. "I'm frightfully sorry, Lucinda. Normally we should love to come round tonight, but it's that time of the month again. I'm afraid. And we have to consider poor George's plenilunary problem."

CARRACK

(a) A large ship of burden, which was also fitted for fighting. A cargo battleship or armoured cargo ship.

ULTRAFIDIAN

(b) Going beyond faith. An obscure theological concept. "I suppose it would be outrageously ultrafidian to expect Anatole to arrive on time."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Ne2 dxe1 1... Qxe2 dxe3 3 g6 and mates! 2 g6! Qxe3 3 Qe4+ and mates

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A positively inspirational night's viewing

My six-month-old daughter, unexpectedly, announces a strange desire to catch at least a room of the 69th Annual Academy Awards (live on BBC2, highlights on BBC1). We creep downstairs, prepare drinks, turn set on and find — surprise — Debbie Reynolds being really quite funny about not being nominated and a wonderful cutaway to "Barbra Streisand not laughing at all. Reynolds eventually opens envelope and presents Oscar for best wonderful music to crickey, a girl I used to be at university with.

Like revenge, under-achievement is a dish best eaten cold and takes some beating at 4am, consumed under the reproachful stare of the next generation. Daughter offers to share bottle and I seriously consider accepting. Creep back to bed, but not before anchoring "Must try harder" note to fridge door with frog-magnet.

Wake up and things quickly improve, thanks largely to the lingering warm after-glow from watching Network First: The Blind School (ITV). When film-makers tackle "difficult" subjects such as disabilities, they traditionally opt for one of two routes to ensure we don't take the easy, channel-hopping way out. They either mawkishly sentimentalise (which this did not) or they present those with the disability in such a brave and positive light that switching over, or even off, becomes an act of personal betrayal. Alan Macmillan's film about the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh followed the second path in textbook style, producing television that was alternately moving, inspiring and funny — and unexpectedly easy to watch.

What it did not produce, I suspect, is completely honest television. Where were the tears, the anger, the frustrations that are a

part of all lives, let alone young lives coping with what one teacher vividly described as "the grief for the loss of their sight"? Macmillan would point to individual scenes and say it was all there — and we did indeed meet a highly engaging bunch of youngsters, whose response to blindness covered the spectrum from pent-up rage to extraordinary serenity. "What you don't have, you don't miss," shrugged Vicky Haylett, who rather stole the show (and certainly the lead part) in the school's production of *Oklahoma!* through being blonde, beautiful and blessed with a fine singing voice.

Others, however, were not so fortunate and while one can understand Macmillan's decision to concentrate on the positive (activities included roller-skating, rock-climbing and water-skiing), it seemed unforgivable that he used the tragically

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

misarranged features of one little girl to grab our attention in early scenes, without later giving her the opportunity to show she was a real human being.

But with the personable likes of Elizabeth Ann (Call that a kerf?) she said derisively, bashing a very modest cobbler with the white stick she was learning to use) and Vicky around, Macmillan's approach was always going to produce feel-

good television. Take Vicky, for instance. On the frustrations of flitting, "I do use a lot of eye contact, but if the guy's blind you do think — what's the point?" In summary, Macmillan's film was an inspiring joy to watch, but somewhere on the cutting room floor were the scenes that might have made it a more honest film as well.

The rest of the evening found me in reflective mood, which is always dangerous in a critic. Take *Peak Practice* (ITV), the current series of which has seen me embark on an extraordinary voyage of discovery. For the opening weeks I thought it was simply too awful to be worth watching. Then there were a few highly enjoyable weeks when it seemed to have become so bad it was unmissable. A happy hour could be spent cringing at the *Peak Practice* horrors — the coffee mugs, the chunky jumpers, Dr Matthews' ill-advised mini-skirts

and, best/worst of all, the unrelenting, mood-setting music.

Now, however, my voyage seems to have brought me to the hitherto mythical island of third thoughts. Might *Peak Practice* actually be quite good? I mean, last night's certainly was. OK, so yet another story line began with yet another person collapsing in front of one of the doctor's cars (in real life you can go five years without seeing anybody collapse in public, in Cardale they rumble like nine-pins). And yes, the argument about whether The Beches should treat drug addicts did get bogged down in still more technical, fund-holding detail. But the acting, particularly from Laura Crossley as the addict who wanted to come off methadone and Darren Tighe, as her ghoulish junkie boyfriend, was excellent and the unrepentantly sentimental ending well-handled.

As for Dr Matthews (Saskia Wickham), there was good and bad news. The good news is that she finally appears to have discovered trouser suits. The bad news is that she is being pursued ever more ardently by Dr Atwood (Gary Mavers). I noticed that Atwood drives a car with the registration prefix GYT. Must be one of those personalised ones.

Finally, the warm glow with which I greeted *The House Detectives* (BBC2) is fading rapidly. Last night's Fenland farmhouse was indeed a fascinating building, but the programme was again horribly over-reliant on Juliet Morris's gap-filling narration to cram two centuries of history into half an hour and never seemed to get to the bottom of anything. And that includes the long-lost cellar, the "discovery" of which was shamefully claimed with the help of a long looting needle. It's not just me who "must try harder".

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (56713)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (1) (54607)
 - 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (1) (5752978)
 - 9.20am Style Challenge (4008355)
 - 9.45am Kilroy (4772220)
 - 10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (80133)
 - 11.00am (1) Regional News and weather (670313)
 - 11.05am The Really Useful Show (7317048)
 - 11.35am Change That (5929278)
 - 12.00am News (1) Regional News (7850406)
 - 12.05pm The Alphabet Game (580249)
 - 12.30pm Going for a Song (6160317)
 - 12.55pm The Weather Show (7922481)
 - 1.00pm One O'Clock News (57794)
 - 1.30pm Regional News (5390162)
 - 1.40pm Neighbours (1) (1298133)
 - 2.05pm Police Rescue Angel faces up to the truth about his father (2758046)
 - 2.55pm Racing from Ascot (3448607)
 - 3.50pm ChockyVision (5770826) 4.10pm Popeye and Son (1759152) 4.35pm The Wild Housecat in series (5704539)
 - 5.00pm Newsround (1) (3084442)
 - 5.10pm Blue Peter (1) (2716323)
 - 5.35pm Neighbours (1) (1) (565597)
 - 6.00pm Six O'Clock News (423)
 - 6.30pm Regional News (775)
 - 7.00pm Noel's Telly Vests Olympic ice-skating champion Tessa Virtue and her partner, host Ted Rogers, remember television and news from 1980 (8510)
 - 7.30pm Tomorrow's World Coverage of the Prince of Wales Awards for innovation. Entries include a decorator who has invented wood-effect paint and a firm which has dramatically improved the asthma inhaler (958)
 - 8.00pm The National Lottery Live Carol Smilla introduces the draw and discovers how one of the lucky jackpot winners is coping with life as a millionaire (614367)
 - 8.15pm 25 Years of the Two Ronnies Classic comedy clips from Messrs Barker and Corbett (857286)
 - 8.50pm Points of View Presented by Anne Robinson (229264)
 - 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News (2317)
 - 9.29pm National Lottery Update (475882)
 - 9.30pm Inside: Journalists descend on the prison after a government White Paper is published. Woody is promoted, but a personal revelation threatens to end his upwardly-mobile career prematurely. Last in series (488539)
 - 10.20pm The Big C EastEnders star Wendy Richard describes her experience of fighting against breast cancer (470775)
 - 11.15pm Under the Influence Sophie Aldred and guests Wendy Penman and Professor Anthony Clare examine whether or not there are any psychological benefits to be gained from a religious approach to life (331355)
 - 11.30pm Ordinary People (1980) Oscar-winning drama, directed by Robert Redford, starring Donald Sutherland and Mary Tyler Moore (77317)
 - 1.30am Weather (3257178)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (+), PlusCode (+) and Video Recorder are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

- BBC2**
- 6.00am Open University: Catalysts Against Pollution (7788758) 6.25pm Sensing Intelligence (790717) 6.50pm Information Technology (1) (5922442) 7.15pm News (1) (7894133) 7.30pm Lassie (8455775) 7.55pm Kilroy (4772220)
 - 8.10pm Wacky Races (5235510) 8.35pm Record Breakers Gold (1) (1) (5111339) 9.00pm Act-U-S (82591) 9.30pm Sweet Valley High (1) 9.55pm Celtic Dots (755017) 10.10pm Playdays (5905626) 10.30pm Baiter (88775)
 - 11.00pm Lassie: The Road Back (1974) Lassie loses her memory. Directed by Dick Moder (1883084)
 - 12.15pm National Trust Gardens (5952133) 12.30pm Working Lunch (39997) 1.00pm Secret Life of Toys (1) (5885636) 1.15pm Pains of Glass (102046) 2.15pm Racing from Ascot (3448607) 3.40pm News (1) (5008189) 3.50pm Going, Going, Gone (5632378) 3.55pm The Beauty Spot (5775775) 3.55pm News (1) (612404) 4.00pm Today's the Day (888) 4.30pm Ready, Steady, Cook (572) 5.00pm Esther (1) (3888) 5.30pm The Village (564268)
 - 5.55pm Turning Points Verity Lambert explains how Dr Who changed her life (202442)
 - 6.00pm Star Trek: The Next Generation The chance of peace in an inter-planetary conflict is hampered when a diplomat loses the ability to communicate (1) (1) (383404)
 - 6.45pm Trev and Simon's Transmission Impossible (889249)
 - 7.00pm Seven Wonders of the World Scientists choose their personal wonders (1) (6512)
 - 7.30pm Black British Arnold Gordon from Brixton finds he is related to an African girl slave presented to Queen Victoria, who took responsibility for her welfare and education (1) (201)
 - 8.00pm University Challenge Herts Manchester College, Oxford v Newnham College, Cambridge (1) (5572)
 - 8.30pm Changing Rooms (1) (1607)



8.00pm Survival Special: Hunters of the Silver Shoals Striking footage of the varied wildlife that inhabits the North Sea (1) Followed by National Lottery Result (7591)

9.00pm The Pelican Brief (1993) Complex legal thriller with Julia Roberts, Denzel Washington and Sam Shepard. A perceptive law student submits a brief about an assassination conspiracy, little realising her theories have hit the nail on the head. Directed by Alan J. Pakula. Continues after the news (1) (7355)

10.00pm News (1) and weather (90510)

10.30pm Regional News (1) (550107)

10.40pm FILM: The Pelican Brief Conclusion of tonight's film (1) (13362274)

12.00am Collins and Maconie's Movie Club (5664485)

12.50pm Real Stories of the Highway Patrol (3871602)

1.15pm FILM: Love Among Thieves (1987) Adventure with Audrey Hepburn, Robert Wagner and Jerry Orbach. Directed by Roger Young (168114)

3.00pm Jones and Jerry (80492821)

3.30pm Not Fade Away (77640)

4.30pm The Time, the Place (62896)

5.00pm Coronation Street (88466)

5.30pm News (15422)

- BBC4**
- 6.00am GMTV (6158794)
 - 9.25pm Chain Letters (1) (4084046)
 - 9.55pm Regional News (5876133)
 - 10.00pm The Time, the Place (38171)
 - 10.30pm This Morning (5874982)
 - 12.20pm Regional News (1) (7849930)
 - 12.30pm News (1) and weather (5189713)
 - 12.55pm Shortland Street (6163404)
 - 1.25pm Home and Away (1) (14709822)
 - 1.50pm Afternoon Live (5625572)
 - 2.20pm Vanessa (1) (5825572)
 - 2.50pm Afternoon Live (5519152)
 - 3.20pm News (1503779)
 - 3.25pm Regional News and weather (6488620)
 - 3.30pm Tots TV (1) (4503298) 3.40pm The Bobs (8212862) 3.50pm Soapy and Co (1) (2038077) 4.40pm Come Zone (1) (4888628)
 - 5.10pm Look and Cook (1) (1) (593907)
 - 5.40pm News (1) and weather (708775)
 - 6.00pm Home and Away (542572)
 - 6.25pm HTV Weather (451881)
 - 6.30pm HTV News (171)
 - 7.00pm Emmerdale The Dingles battle of the burgers hits up and Viv is desperate to make a fresh start for the children's sake. Alan Turner refuses to turn a blind eye to Terry's behaviour (1) (6238)
 - 7.30pm Coronation Street Don goats as he takes a particularly cruel revenge on Alfie. Mrs Don decides to draw a line under the past and start afresh (1) (555)

- As HTV West except:**
- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (6163404)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (5933607)
 - 6.25-7.00pm Central News (840897)
 - 12.20pm Daffodil the Enemy (8056447)
 - 1.20pm Family Bunker (588824)
 - 2.15pm The Chart Show (888386)
 - 3.20pm Comedy Central (2088553)
 - 4.15pm Central Jobfinder '97 (4951350)
 - 5.20pm Asian Eye (8705378)

- As HTV West except:**
- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (6163404)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (5933607)
 - 6.00-7.00pm Westcountry Live (34442)

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 - 6.00-7.00pm Home Truths (171)
 - 5.00pm Freetime (88488)

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- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (6163404)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (5933607)
 - 6.25-7.00pm Anglia News (840897)
 - 10.20pm Anglia Air Watch (600881)

- Starz 6.00pm Sesame Street (59423)**
- 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (47317)
 - 9.00pm Bewitched (84659)
 - 9.30pm Film: Where No Vultures Fly (1951). Adventure set in Kenya starring Anthony Steel as a game warden in conflict with ivory poachers (7188626)

- 11.25pm The Pink Panther (9750959)
- 11.50pm Terryloons (4321423)
- 12.00pm House to House (79423)
- 12.30pm Baby It's You (24065)
- 1.00pm Slot Meltdown (40404)

- 1.30pm Film: Tere Tahiti (1982) starring John Mills and James Mason as army officers who carry over their wartime class struggle on to the peaceful Pacific island (5512688)
- 3.20pm Fresh Pop (880341)
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- CENTRAL**
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SAILING 49

Golding keeps lead despite battering from storm front

SPORT

WEDNESDAY MARCH 26 1997

TENNIS 50

Quiet Swede serves to dampen young Australian's fire

Walking wounded continue to give England cause for concern



Le Tissier cuts a lonely figure at Bisham Abbey yesterday after joining the England squad that is preparing for the match against Mexico. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Collymore gets Mexican wave

THEY wore tracksuits not dressing gowns, they played head tennis not dominoes. But when the shell-shocked survivors of an increasingly frenetic FA Carling Premiership season gathered at Bisham Abbey yesterday to try to rescue the England match against Mexico on Saturday from descending into the realms of a hospital soap opera, they looked for all the world like convalescents checking them-

selves thankfully into a rest home. Some strolled through the grounds, appearing now and then from behind hedgerows, chatting in the gentle spring sunshine. A few sat in the shelter of a small white marquee at the side of the training pitch, a couple talked on mobile phones.

Matthew Le Tissier, whose foot injury has become something of a *cause célèbre*,

stooped to pick up a wayward tennis ball that had bounced over a high fence and threw it back on to the court. But he extended himself no further. Robbie Fowler, fresh from his altruistic antics at Highbury on Monday night, eschewed entreaties to expand on his attempted largesse and watched training from the sidelines.

On the pitch, the healthiest ones, hardy men such as David Batty and Paul Ince, stood either side of a volleyball-style net, nodding the ball back and forth. Later, another group of five or six players, including Jamie Redknapp and Ian Wright, formed a small circle and indulged in some control practice, firing off one-touch passes like the spring-loaded sides of a pinball machine.

The squad members who actually kicked a ball, though, were in the minority. Five players — Gary Pallister, David Beckham, Nick Barmby, Dominic Matteo and Darren Anderton — did not make it to Buckinghamshire at all, retained by their clubs so they could minister to their injuries. A further eight — Teddy Sheringham, Tony Adams, Gareth Southgate, Le Tissier, Steve McManaman and Sol Campbell among them — were condemned by their knocks and strains to remain idle.

Reduced to 12 fit players, Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, drafted in new men to

OLIVER HOLT



Football Correspondent

paper over the cracks with each piece of bad news. Last week David May, the Manchester United central defender, got the call. Yesterday Stan Collymore, the Liverpool centre forward, was summoned, along with Phil Neville, whose brother, Gary, is doubtful for the match, and Stuart Pearce, the Nottingham Forest player-manager, was also brought in to bolster the numbers.

Hoddle did a good job of putting a brave face on things, pointing out that the injury glut would give players such as May and Collymore, who would otherwise have been denied a chance, an opportunity to stake a claim for a place in his World Cup plans.

But after he had dismissed suggestions that his problems had been worsened by a club versus country rift involving spats with leading Premiership managers such as Alex Ferguson, Roy Evans and Graeme Souness, he admitted that, had he been able to foresee the flood of problems, he would have abandoned plans for the Mexico game.

"If I had had a crystal ball, then I would agree with you that in the circumstances it might have been better to have a training get-together rather than a friendly," Hoddle said. "But we had to finalise this five or six months ago and, after four qualifying games, it was the first opportunity in the calendar for a friendly."

"If I had been in charge for 12 or 15 matches by now, then the situation would be different, too. I quite respect that at this stage of the season there are people going for cups and if it had been this time next year, I would not be looking at a friendly game because I know that the players are tired."

"But we are at an earlier stage in our development at the moment and there are still positives rather than negatives. It is not ideal because I would have liked to have worked with a certain system and that may have to wait to the summer now, but if people like Nicky Butt and Stan Collymore get control of a shirt, they have got a shout of

keeping it and so this situation may quicken development in other ways.

"Whether they are ready or not is neither here nor there. They will learn how to play at this level and the fact that these things have happened means I can experiment. Even if we lose the match, there would still be a lot to gain."

Hoddle, who said he still planned to use the match against Mexico to glean information and experience of how to play against South American teams, insisted that the "lines of communication" between him and Ferguson, in particular, were working well and that disagreements about the release of players, even for checking of injuries, had been exaggerated.

He said he had spoken to the Manchester United manager on Monday night and agreed with Ferguson that it was best for Beckham, who has a hamstring problem, and Pallister to remain in the North West for treatment. He cited the presence of the Neville brothers at Bisham as evidence of co-operation.

Towards the end of his press conference, he even managed a broad grin. He said Pearce, who will be in the starting line-up against Mexico, had been delighted to receive his call-up. "This time," Hoddle said, "I didn't have to go to the manager first."

Fair play to Fowler, page 48

Jockey Cl investigates doctor's la

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

A SERIES of blunders that ended belatedly with Tony McCoy being banned from riding in the Martell Grand National next week could spark a radical shake-up in medical services at the 59 racecourses in Britain.

McCoy, the champion National Hunt jockey, was knocked unconscious for about three minutes after a nasty fall at Uttoxeter eight days ago, but a racecourse medical officer failed to enforce Jockey Club rules requiring the rider to receive a hospital check-up and an automatic 21-day riding suspension.

Instead, Dr Andrew Toman stood down McCoy for ten days — a term not provided for in Jockey Club medical provisions on concussion — and the rider was allowed to go home.

If the ten-day medical suspension had remained in force, McCoy would have been free to ride in the Grand National on Saturday week. However, when Dr Michael Turner, the Jockey Club medical adviser, discovered the mistake he extended the ban to 21 days.

The serious lapse, which has infuriated officials at the Jockey Club and prompted an urgent investigation, comes after recent criticism of medical shortcomings at Warwick, Yarmouth and Southwell, where Richard Davis was killed in a riding accident.

Although the Jockey Club has provided detailed instructions for medical cover, it has no control or jurisdiction over doctors who are appointed by, and are responsible to, individual racecourses. A total of 198 doctors are on racecourse panels but some may only be on duty for two or three meetings a year.

"These are well-meaning people trying to do a good job looking after jockeys' interests, but sometimes they don't quite apply the rules as they are written down by the Jockey Club," Turner said yesterday. "This is something we are constantly looking at and seeing how we can resolve. I have no direct jurisdiction over the doctors. That is perfectly reasonable given the way everything was set up, but if you want to move on and professionalise what is at present a 'non-professional' service then things will have to change."

The Jockey Club look at the id small, regional course medic swarable to P which would regularly at a fore keep abn requirements.

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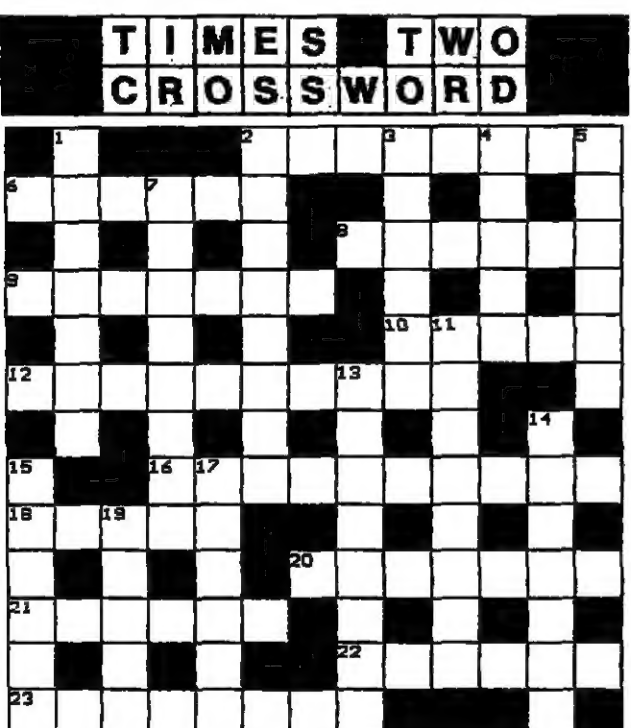


McCoy: mis

After lying u the racetrack, treated by a v lance attendan Lloyd, a cours subsequently to the jockey had out for about t However, when ined McCoy in t room near t weighing-room enforce the rule

David McAlli of the course at yesterday: "M have been sto total of 21 days a hospital. The d tion is brand ne us on January 1 the job and very made a horlicks McAllister ac pose ultimately bility is mine."

Medical bri Ra



No 1051

- ACROSS
- 2 Ruskin-like painter (8)
 - 6 Savoury tart (6)
 - 8 Thick, muddy (liquid) (6)
 - 9 London cathedral (2,5)
 - 10 S American mammal (5)
 - 12 Weird pattern in wheat (4,6)
 - 16 (Army) non-officers (5,5)
 - 18 Large type of steak (1-4)
 - 20 Statistical annual (7)
 - 21 Thundercloud; saintly aura (6)
 - 22 Element 1, its furtive an antiseptic (6)
- DOWN
- 1 Breach; sever (7)
 - 2 Very nearly (4-4)
 - 3 Violent gust; scream (6)
 - 4 Land to Egypt's west (5)
 - 5 Spreading from centre (6)
 - 7 Tournament winner (8)
 - 11 Public money for defendants (5,3)
 - 13 Russian (alphabet) (8)
 - 14 Kiev its capital (7)
 - 15 Appalling smell (6)
 - 17 Right to keep job (6)
 - 19 A mollusc, the sea-ear (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 1050

ACROSS: 1 Truncated 6 Set 8 Endorse 9 Miami 10 Fire 11 Standard 13 Hit man 14 Bandit 17 Fantasia 18 Film 20 Flies 21 Trickle 22 Hag 23 Agreement

DOWN: 1 Twelfth 2 Understanding 3 Curt 4 Twenty 5 Demoniac 6 Slop and fiddle 7 Third 12 Malaysia 15 Tempest 16 Winter 17 Fifth 19 Five

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DOWN: 1 Attempt 2 Storm 3 Lap 4 Endure 5 Sub judice 6 Rosetta 7 Maybe 11 Privilege 13 Manager 15 Filmm 16 Factor 17 Dunes 18 Proud 20 Guna

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Ballesteros loses Ryder Cup fight

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN JACKSONVILLE

THE selection process for the Ryder Cup this year will not be changed and, on legal advice, plans for a ballot of members of the PGA European Tour, seeking more picks for the captain, Severiano Ballesteros, have been put aside.

Ken Schofield, executive director of the tour, made the announcement yesterday in Jacksonville, Florida, where many of the leading European golfers are gathered for the Players' Championship, which starts tomorrow.

It is a moot point whether they were more dampened by torrential rain that caused the course and practice facilities to be closed or by Schofield's announcement. The ten leaders in the Ryder Cup table on August 31 will automatically earn their places in the team for the match in Valderrama from September 26-28, leaving Ballesteros with only two wild-card choices.

Nick Faldo, Colin Montgomerie, Ian Woosnam, Sam Torrance and Bernhard Langer had all spoken out in favour of an increase in the number of selections made by the captain in order to cover the eventuality that Faldo, Langer or Woosnam, among others, might not earn enough points to win an automatic place.

At a players' meeting during the Portuguese Open, Ballesteros received backing for his request for a ballot to see whether there was enough support for the system to be changed. However, the Ryder Cup Committee took legal advice as to whether this could be done at this stage of a selection process that began last September.

"The only lawful basis on which selection procedure could be validly altered at this stage was if the unanimous consent of all playing members eligible for selection was obtained," Nigel Davis, QC, said. Counsel said that any one player could obtain an injunction to prevent such an alteration being put into effect.

An hour before Schofield's announcement, Faldo had emphasised why he and so many of his colleagues felt that a change was necessary. "I think we got away with it last time [at Oak Hill] through Olazábal withdrawing and Woosnam getting in. But this time the old school are getting older. And with me over here you have got Langer, Woosnam, Olazábal and Pamevik all of a sudden

perhaps needing a captain's selection. We need the insurance factor."

Ballesteros was keeping his own counsel in Santander last night but may issue a statement today. Faldo's reaction was typical of that of the senior players.

"We should have made a change after the last Ryder Cup," he said. "Seve made a big mistake. He should have said when he was appointed [captain] 'if you want me I want four picks'. He had the chance to get it right. The European Tour has exploded since winning the Ryder Cup. It has been the saviour of our tour. You cannot argue with that."

Neil Coles, the chairman of the European Tour board of directors, said last night: "We recognise that the debate will continue and the Ryder Cup Committee will continue to take note of all comments made by the membership, with a view to discussing the selection procedure for forthcoming matches."



Schofield: ruled out poll

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